The discussion of the concept of *Bid'a* from early Islam up to the twelfth century A.H.

by

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THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF *BIDʿA* FROM EARLY ISLAM UP TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY A.H.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comprehensive survey of the primary sources containing discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* from the time of early Islam down to the twelfth/eighteenth century. It contains a detailed discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* as it is found in the Koran, the Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*), and the Companions' traditions (*athars*). This is because these sources constitute the most important bases for Islamic law and also sources of guidance for understanding any such concept. Therefore, the Koran and the traditions are frequently referred to by writers on the subject of *bidʿa*. Thus, the thesis presents a historical examination of the subject by tracing the concept of *bidʿa* back to its original in the Koran and the *Sunna*. Thereafter, an extensive effort is made to cover the

writings of the major contributors to the discussion of *bid'a* from the second/eighth to the twelfth/eighteenth centuries.

In order to analyze the discussion of the concept of *bid'a* during almost ten centuries of Islam, the examination is divided into three periods in order to observe how development in the understanding of *bid'a* occurred and also to establish the characteristics of each period. The first period is principally occupied with discussion of credal innovations, while in the middle period the emphasis becomes focused on ritual and custom innovations, and also theoretical discussion of the concept of *bid'a.* The third period accommodates discussion of all varieties: credal, ritual, and custom innovations, and theory of *bid'a.*

The examination of the discussion of *bid'a* is treated according to the different groups of scholars who belonged to the four major schools of jurisprudence, namely the Ḥanafite, Mālikite, Shāfi'ite, and Ḥanbalite schools. All of these scholars participated in the developing discussion of the concept of *bid'a* and shared a common concern over *bid'a.* However, they differed in terms of their individual contributions. The thesis therefore aims to discover the major themes that preoccupied the four major schools of jursprudence.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

ABBREVIATIONS

BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam,* new ed.
HI	*Hamdard Islamicus*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
IQ	*Islamic Quarterly*
IS	*Islamic Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
MW	*Muslim World*
Res. Bull.	
Cad (Ibadan)	*Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation*
RS	*Religious Studies*
SEI	*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*
SI	*Studia Islamica*

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Consonants

ء	’	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	‘	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Short vowels

ـَ	a
ـُ	u
ـِ	i

Long vowels

ـَا	ā
ـَى	ā
ـُو	ū
ـِي	ī

Diphthongs

ـَوْ	aw
ـَيْ	ay

Note:

ـَة a *final,* at *in construct form.*

PRELIMINARY NOTE

The customary Muslim expressions of respect following the names of the Prophet Muḥammad and other prophets, such as *ṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa-sallam* (God bless him and grant him salvation!) are implied in the present text every time a prophet's name is mentioned, but they are not written.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family,
particularly to my parents,
my wife (Umm Jinan),
and to both of my daughters (Jinan and Banan).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF THE SOURCES

Introduction

The term *bidʿa* occurs in the corpus of traditions (*Sunna*) attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad, who said,

> ...the best discourse is the Book of Allah and the best example is the example of Muḥammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him); the worst practice is the invention [*muḥdathāt*] of new elements in the faith and every innovation (*bidʿa*) is misguidance [*ḍalāla*]...[1]

In fact, the concept of *bidʿa* is a dynamic one since, in general, it does not involve issues that are black and white and its specific contents remain unknown. Another reason for this dynamism is the expansion of the Muslim community which brought into the fold of Islam people from many cultural backgrounds with their own traditions, some of which they wanted to import into Islam, such as the veneration of sacred sites. This provoked much scholarly discussion of the concept of *bidʿa*. Not just region, but time also has had a major influence on Muslim thought, since the gap in time from the Prophet, his Companions, and

their successors to the later generations has been one in which a range of innovations have emerged. However, Muslim scholars stood firmly opposed to any innovations (*bida'*) which they understood as specifically anything not approved by the Koran, not condoned by the Prophet, not mentioned in the Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*), or actually contradictory to their spirit.

This thesis is a descriptive account of the most representative sources on the discussion of the concept of *bid'a* in the sense of credal innovations (*bida' fī al-'aqā'id*), ritual innovations (*bida' fī al-sha'ā'ir*), and custom innovations (*bida' fī al-'ādāt*), and it deals also with the theoretical discussion of the concept of *bid'a*. It covers the period from the second/eighth to the twelfth/eighteenth centuries.

The occasion for this study is the lack of any existing detailed research on the subject apart from a few articles and books in English which discuss the concept of *bid'a* only incidentally and in no great depth. In Arabic also, the discussion of the concept of *bid'a* can only be found infrequently in secondary sources and there the approach lacks the objective approach required in a scientific study of this nature. These secondary sources do not provide any survey of the various discussions on *bid'a*, nor do they consider the development that has taken place in the course of this discussion. They are concerned only in a general way with the causes of innovation and its effects and contain no detailed analysis, and so the matter has stood until the present day. Further, as S.

Labib has observed, 'The problems of the [*sic*] *bidʿa* are little discussed nowadays in the Islamic world, since the problems are no longer acute due [to] the continuous progress of modernization.'[2]

The present study follows a historical approach, by tracing the concept back to its origins in the Koran, in the Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*), and in the traditions of the Companions (*athars*). It will also survey the discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* by the great scholars from the second/eighth century up to the twelfth/eighteenth century. It will refer to the great writers on *bidʿa* from the four schools of jurisprudence, namely the Ḥanafites, Mālikites, Shāfiʿites, and Ḥanbalites, and it will include an examination of the most famous writings on *bidʿa* produced by such scholars as Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, al-Ṭurṭūshī, Abū Shāma, al-Shāṭibī, and al-Turkumānī. S. Labib, who published a short article on al-Turkumānī, explained that the books of al-Ṭurṭūshī, Ibn al-Ḥājj, and al-Turkumānī 'are essential sources for the understanding of the life and strivings of Islamic society in the middle ages. These sources have been by no means sufficiently used for research.'[3] The present work intends to make up for that lack. It will also extend to a coverage of both the writers, like al-Ashʿarī, who wrote on credal innovations, a discussion which occupied the early period of Islam, and the great adversaries of religious innovations, namely Ibn Taymiyya and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, who attacked cultic practices contrary to the Koran, *Sunna,* and the Companions' traditions, thus modelling themselves on the primitive Muslim generation. The specific object of this research is therefore to

explore the gradual development of the discussion of *bid'a* as it may be found in the extant writings of scholars.

The Aims of the Study

The specific objectives of the present study may be listed as follows.

1. To study the concept of *bid'a* in the Koran. In order to achieve this task, reference is required to the earliest interpretations of the Koran such as that of al-Ṭabarī. In this respect also Arabic dictionaries are useful. In addition to these, the Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*), another source of the *Sharī'a,* will be examined. This is because the traditions can be accounted both as an independent source of evidence and as a valid interpretation and elaboration of the Koran. Therefore, we can find in the *Ḥadīth* more information on the concept of *bid'a* than is to be found in the Koran. In the eyes of Muslims, the Koran and *Sunna* are the most important abiding sources for any discussion of religious issues such as this. Allāh says in the Koran,

> O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to God and His Apostle, if ye do believe in God and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination.[4]

Al-Ṭabarī (one of the earliest interpreters of the Koran) comments on this verse by saying that this is an order from Allāh to obey His commandments and the

commandments of the Prophet. However, he adds, after the death of the Prophet, we are obliged to follow his *Sunna*.[5] Going further, he says that in the case of differences, the matter must be referred to the Koran and the *Sunna*.[6] Also in the *Sunna,* we find the same emphasis on adhering to the Koran and the *Sunna* which will be protected sources preventing their adherents from going astray. Thus Mālik reported that the Messenger of Allāh said, 'I have left two things with you. As long as you hold fast to them, you will not go astray. They are the Book of Allāh and the *sunna* of His Prophet.'[7] In the eyes of Muslims, therefore, there are two abiding sources of guidance for the faithful. This is because Muslims believe that there will be no further revelation and no later messenger, for Islam is the last message and the Prophet Muḥammad is the last Messenger. So Allāh says, 'Muḥammad is not father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets.'[8]

2. To attempt to discover the meaning of *bid'a* from Scripture and to determine to what extent the various Islamic schools of jurisprudence differ in this regard. The aim will be to arrive at as comprehensive a definition as possible of *bid'a* based on the teaching of the Koran, the *Sunna,* and the *salaf* (the first three generations of Islam's pious men).

3. To survey the most important writings on *bid'a* from the second/eighth century up to the twelfth/eighteenth century. This survey will cover the four major schools of jurisprudence, the thoughts of which will be

discussed within the three major periods making up this time–scale. Each of the schools will be dealt with sectionally within each of the three ages, since the adherents of each school shared the same ideas and concerns within each period. This treatment of the subject in three major periods will enable us to see the development of the discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* when the scholars were concerned with a range of both ritual and credal innovations. Also during these three periods, we shall review both the great writers on *bidʿa* who contributed much to the development of the discussion from a theoretical point of view (such as al–Shāṭibī, Ibn Taymiyya, al–Qarāfī, and al–ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al–Salām) and also the people who were concerned with the legal aspects of the subject (such as al–Ṭurṭūshī, Abū Shāma, Ibn al–Ḥājj, and al–Turkumānī).

To summarize, the objective of this thesis is to produce a descriptive account of the most important sources on the discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* in terms of who discussed what and when in the areas of credal, ritual, and custom innovations and theoretical discussion of the concept of *bidʿa,* as it is presented by scholars from the four Sunnite schools of jurisprudence from the second/eighth to the twelfth/eighteenth centuries. In addition, it will include an examination of what the Koran, Prophetic traditions, and traditions of the Companions provide, in order to help understand the meaning of the concept of *bidʿa.*

Credal innovation occupied the majority of the writing of the scholars in the first period (second–fifth/eighth–eleventh centuries), due to the threat posed

by such innovatory groups as the Khārijites and the Shī'ites. However, in the middle of the fifth–seventh/eleventh–thirteenth centuries, there was a shift in emphasis towards discussion of ritual and custom innovations. This may be due to the fact that orthodoxy with regard to credal innovations had already been hammered out by the writers of the early period. Another possible factor determining the concern of scholars of the middle period with ritual and custom innovations was the expansion of the Muslim community, leading to a close contact with other religious communities where the possibility of imitating them in ritual matters and custom was an ever–present possibility. The discussion of the middle period covered in greater detail the division of *bida'* into good and bad and into five categories corresponding to the five categories of legal valuations: obligatory, prohibited, recommended, undesirable, and permissible deeds. The third period (seventh–twelfth/thirteenth–eighteenth centuries) showed an unprecedented concern with the discussion of credal, ritual, and custom innovations. The third period also includes discussion of the theoretical aspects of *bid'a* and the strong attack against the division of *bida'* whether into good or bad, or into the five categories of legal valuations.

It remains in this introduction to state the structure of the present work. The remainder of this first chapter will survey the sources, both primary and secondary, that are used in the study. The primary sources are presented in a chronological sequence according to the date of death of their writers and short biographical notes on their authors are also included. By this means we will

obtain a general idea of the authors who dealt with the concept of *bidʿa* in a historical context. The secondary sources will be seen to be a selection of some books and articles in English which discuss the concept of *bidʿa* in a cursory fashion. They also include some books in Arabic which similarly discuss the concept of *bidʿa*.

Chapter Two provides the essential background information for our study, presenting the material relevant to a discussion of *bidʿa,* first from Koranic verses which, however, present only vague hints as to the concept. Muslims see the Koran as only the embodiment of revelation; it is therefore the first source of the *Sharīʿa.* However, they also see the Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*) as the second source because they explain and elaborate the Koranic verses, and this is true of the concept of *bidʿa.* The Prophetic traditions generally emphasize the importance of following the *Sunna* and the necessity of avoiding innovations. The discussion of this chapter also examines the various definitions of *bidʿa* and seeks to arrive at an adequate definition based on Scripture, *Ḥadīth,* and the understandings of scholars.

Chapter Three contains a discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* in the early period, i.e. roughly the time between the second/eighth and the fifth/eleventh centuries. This time-span may be viewed as a unit as in it the majority of scholars were concerned with discussing credal innovations. Our examination attempts to determine the attitudes of the most famous scholars of the four major

schools of jurisprudence who were concerned about the notion of *bid'a*. It includes a review of the opinions of the eponymous founders of each school. The credal innovations that come into question in the context of *bid'a* during this period touch on such fundamental beliefs of the Sunnites as the doctrine of the creation of the Koran. We shall notice also the firm stand that they took against any innovation presented by groups whom they deemed unorthodox.

Chapter Four contains a discussion of the concept of *bid'a* in the middle period, i.e. approximately the period between the fifth/eleventh and the seventh/thirteenth centuries. Again, this time–span stands as a homogeneous unit because in the fifth century there was a marked shift in emphasis from credal innovation to ritual and custom innovations, with which scholars were deeply concerned throughout the period. Ritual innovations consist of novelties in such matters as prayer, pilgrimage, mosque arrangements, and the recitation of the Koran. Custom innovations consist of anything to do with the habits of people which do not pose a direct threat to belief and ritual, such as dancing and singing. It must be noted, however, that some scholars did not regard these matters as varieties of custom innovations. The chapter also contains a discussion of the relevance of the division of *bida'* into good and bad practices, or into the five legal valuation categories.

Chapter Five contains a discussion of the concept of *bid'a* in the later period, covering roughly the duration between the seventh/thirteenth and the

twelfth/eighteenth centuries. This period is characterized by an abundance of literature developing the subject from all schools of jurisprudence. Their discussion centres on all aspects of *bidʿa:* credal, ritual, and custom, as well as the theoretical discussion of the topic.

Chapter Six forms a general conclusion to our study. It summarizes the development of the concept of *bidʿa* from the earliest period of Islam to the twelfth/eighteenth century. It also contains an epitome of the features and characteristics of each period with a special assessment of the contribution made to the development of the discusion of *bidʿa* by each school of jurisprudence.

Survey of the Sources

A wide range of sources are involved in the investigation of our subject. The incipient notion of *bidʿa* can be found in the Koran, but the earliest clear statement of the concept is to be found in the *Sunna.* Discussion of the concept can be found in books which focus on the creed and rituals of Islam, as well as in a number of other sources. Below, we have divided these sources into two main categories, namely primary and secondary sources. In our survey we will concentrate more on the primary sources, but without neglecting the secondary sources which will generally, however, be noted more briefly.

Primary Sources

The primary sources used in this study are selected from an intensive survey of the classical Arabic literature dealing either specifically or else in part with our main subject.

1. The Koran and Prophetic Tradition (*Sunna*):

These two sources are the most permanent and fundamental in Islamic religious culture. It is not surprising that the Koran does not spell out explicitly the meaning of the concept of innovation. In Islamic tradition the Koran is regarded as the book of guidance, being God's revelation, for all mankind, so we do not expect to find every matter given specific temporal and local clarification in the Koran. The task of further clarification is left for Prophetic Tradition which provides greater insight into the concept of *bidʿa,* although there is no really complete definition of *bidʿa* to be found here either. Generally, the *Ḥadīth* hints that *bidʿa* is the opposite of Prophetic Tradition both in letter and spirit. Let us illustrate, for example, with a verse from the Koran, followed by a report (*ḥadīth*) from the Prophetic Tradition concerning the notion of *bidʿa.* In the former, Allāh addresses His Prophet by saying,

> Say: I am not an innovation (*bidʿan*) among the Messengers, and I know not what shall be done with me or with you. I only follow what is revealed to me; I am only a clear warner.[9]

This and the other occurrences of the word *bid'a* will be discussed later, but here we may simply note the brevity of the context in which the term occurs. The word *bid'a* and its derivatives occur many times in the canonical collections of *Ḥadīth* which were collected mostly between the years 262/875 and 313/925, that is to say, about two centuries after the establishment of the Koranic text. However, there exist early works on *Ḥadīth* such as *al-Muwaṭṭa'* by al-Imām Mālik (93-179/711-795), which may also be accounted a work on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and *al-Musnad* by al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (164-241/780-855). One such tradition from the canonical sources which is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad reports that the Prophet's Companion al-'Irbāḍ b. Sāriyya said,

> One day, after the Prophet led us in the dawn (*fajr*) prayer and turned around to face us, he exhorted us. Then one of the audience said: O Apostle of God, this exhortation (*maw'iẓa*) is like that of one who is about to depart (*muwaddi'*). Therefore, could you give us a last instruction?[10]
>
> The Prophet replied with these parting words: I call you to the fear of God (*taqwā*) and to absolute obedience (hearing and obeying), as of an Ethiopian slave. For those of you who survive me will see many conflicting opinions. It is your duty to follow my *Sunna* for just and enlightened caliphs; bite this *Sunna* with your molars [i.e. cling closely to it]. I warn you against novelties, as every novelty is *bid'a*.[11]

This *ḥadīth* indicates the strong emphasis placed on adhering to the

Sunna and avoiding innovation. However, the explicit contents of *bidʿa* remain unenlarged upon. While the Koran gives an embryonic notion of *bidʿa,* the *Sunna* pays comparatively greater attention to it. This matter will be discussed further in the following chapter.

It is clear that the Koran and *Sunna* represent the necessary starting point for our purpose. Yet it is difficult to understand the Koranic verses standing by themselves. For the purposes of the present study, we will therefore make use of two leading interpretations of the Koranic text. These are the works of al-Ṭabarī (224-310/838-922), *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl al-Qurʾān,* and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.* This latter work is used only in relation to a few verses of the Koran where the editing of the work of al-Ṭabarī is still incomplete. The reason for relying on these two works will be explained in the following chapter under the sub-heading "The Koran". However, many other written sources are also significant with respect to the definition and explanation of *bidʿa.* Of special importance are the books written during the early Islamic period. The first such book - a special collection of *ḥadīth*s relating to *bidʿa* - was composed by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (d. 289/901). This was produced during the very same period when the canonical collections of *Ḥadīth* were being assembled. There are in addition two other early works which, however, are known only by their authors and titles since they are no longer extant. These are: Muḥammad b. Saḥnūn (d. 250/864), *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā Ahl al-Bidaʿ* (The Book of Refutation of the Innovators); and Abū Zakarīyā Yaḥyā b. ʿAwn (d. 298/910), *Kitāb fī al-Radd*

'alā Ahl al-Bida' (The Book which concerns the Refutation of the Innovators).[12] It is certain that the former belongs to the Mālikite school, whereas the latter can only speculatively be attributed to the same school, since the author was of North African origin.

2. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ:

Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ b. Bazī' Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Qurṭubī was born in 199 or 200/814 or 815 in Córdoba and became an adherent of the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. He travelled to Mecca and Medina in the Hejaz, to Syria, Iraq, and Egypt at the time when these territories were under the control of the 'Abbāsid caliphate which at that time was at the apex of its power. Andalusia, in the Iberian Peninsula, was, however, under the Umayyad caliphate. Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347), quoting Ibn al-Farḍī (d. 403/1012), stated that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was a scholar in *Ḥadīth*, its methodology, and its chains of transmission, and further that he was also eager to spread this knowledge all over Andalusia. He was described as a pious and ascetic man, yet he has been criticized on account of his weak memory. The criticism of Ibn al-Faraḍī was that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ sometimes rejected *ḥadīth*s, arguing that they were not from the Prophet, while in fact they were. He was, moreover, criticized for not having enough knowledge of the Arabic language and jurisprudence, mainly because Arabic was not his mother tongue. He died in 289/901.[13] He wrote a book entitled *Kitāb al-Bid'a wa-Nahy 'anhā* (The Book of

Innovation and the Order to Avoid it).

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's book is important because it is the first collection of *ḥadīth*s concerning *bid'a* and also the earliest such book to survive. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was concerned with the collection of Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*s) and also with Companions' traditions (*athar*s) which are concerned with *bid'a* because of his awareness of the danger of the spread of innovations and the necessity to avoid them. In his introduction he mentions that several *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s demonstrate that some people will be bearers of knowledge and will explain the right path to the community. With this in mind as his own mission, he reported that a man called Asad b. Mūsā (d. 212/827) had once written to Asad b. al-Furāt (d. 213/828), saying that he (Asad b. Mūsā) had heard that Asad b. al-Furāt was well known for his adherence to the *Sunna* and his criticism of innovation. Asad b. Mūsā encouraged Asad b. al-Furāt, saying that the reward for the refutation of innovators was higher than that of performing supererogatory prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, and even fighting in the cause of Allāh.[14] This would seem to suggest that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was greatly motivated by this prospect of the higher reward that was due to one who refuted *bid'a*. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ does not comment on the traditions collected by him in his work. The reason for this is that he was a mere collector of traditions and so was influenced by the *Ḥadīth* system. Indeed, it is not always clear why certain *ḥadīth*s were included.

3. Al-Ash'arī:

In the third/ninth century there lived a scholar of the generation following that of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ: Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl b. Abī Bishr al-Ash'arī al-Baṣrī (260-324/873-935), who has been described as the scholar of Islam and who was the founder of the Ash'arite[15] school of theology. He was originally a Mu'tazilite who studied at the feet of the Mu'tazilite Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī. Al-Ash'arī belonged to the Mu'tazilites[16] for forty years and became an important figure among them. At the end of that time, however, he reached a crisis and, after staying at home for fifteen days, he went to the mosque and ascended the pulpit[17] from which he made the following confession:

> O people, I have been hidden from you because I was in an undecided state resulting from the fact that I had equal evidence [regarding Mu'tazilite as opposed to Sunnite doctrine] and neither of the evidences seemed convincing to me. So I asked Allāh, the Exalted One, to guide me to the truth. Allāh accepted my prayer and therefore I am going to abandon my original beliefs.[18]

In other words, he abandoned the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites. This event reportedly took place during the month of Ramaḍān when al-Ash'arī claims to have seen the Prophet Muḥammad three times in a vision in which the Prophet asked him to defend the doctrines reported to him. So al-Ash'arī abandoned the rational arguments of dialectical theology

(*kalām*). But in the third vision, the Prophet commanded him not to leave rational argument, but to defend the doctrines reported to him, which are the truth.[19]

> Whatever be the truth of this story, it is a succinct account of al-Ash‘arī's position. He abandoned the dogmatic theses of the Mu‘tazilites for those of opponents like Ibn Ḥanbal, whom he professed to follow; but he defended his new beliefs by the type of rational argument which the Mu‘tazilites employed.[20]

So al-Ash‘arī ‘was destined to deal the death-blow to Mu‘tazilism.’[21] He belonged to the Shāfi‘ite school of jurisprudence despite the baseless claim of some people that he was a Mālikite.[22] Al-Ash‘arī was one of the most distinguished scholars among the Sunnites. This was due to his knowledge, piety, and work to protect the Sunnite creed from innovators.[23]

Those of his books with which we are here concerned are three, all of which seem to have been written after he abandoned the Mu‘tazilite position. The first book is *Kitāb al-Luma‘ fī al-Radd ‘alā Ahl al-Zaygh wa-’l-Bid‘a* (The Book of Light Beams in the Refutation of Deviators and Innovators). This short work is, as its title suggests, a refutation of innovators (*ahl al-bid‘a*) and deviators (*ahl al-zaygh*), i.e. the Mu‘tazilites, Qadarites,[24] Khārijites,[25] and Shī‘ites,[26] in favour of the Sunnite doctrines. The second book is *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn* (Discourses on the Muslims and the Differences between the

People who Pray). This large book consists of two parts. The first section in it that is of concern to us is a discussion of the sects of Islam, their branches, and their beliefs. This is the first written account of such Islamic groups as the Shī'ites, Khārijites, Murji'ites,[27] and Mu'tazilites. However, al-Ash'arī paid the greatest attention to the Mu'tazilites who were a popular group during his time and whose doctrines he knew intimately. He felt that their threat was severe and imminent. The second part of his book is a discussion of delicate philosophical issues, particularly those that were debated between the Sunnites and the Mu'tazilites. The third book of al-Ash'arī that concerns us is entitled *al-Ibāna fī Uṣūl al-Diyāna* (The Elucidation of Religion's Foundations). It is a small book intended to demonstrate the validity of the Sunnite doctrines and also to refute deviators and innovators, especially the Mu'tazilites, Khārijites, Qadarites, Jahmiyya,[28] Murji'ites, and Shī'ites. In his first and third books al-Ash'arī criticized the deviators and innovators much more sharply than he did in the second book. This is because the function of these books was different to that of the second one. The function of the first and third was to refute the innovatory groups, while the purpose of the second was to discuss in detail their branches and their doctrines, as the book's title suggests.

4. Al-Malaṭī:

In the fourth/tenth century there lived Muḥammad b. 'Abd

al-Raḥmān al-Malaṭī who was knowledgeable in jurisprudence, the Koran, and recitation. He belonged to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence and died in 377/987 at 'Asqalān.[29] His work entitled *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Ahwā' wa-'l-Bida'* (The Warning and Refutation of the People of Passions [or Desires] and Innovations) is, as the author states, the third volume, but the first and second volumes are now lost. It is possible that the preceding volumes discussed the faiths of Jews and Christians, as is suggested by the editor.[30] This third volume is relevant to our topic because it is the second book to deal in detail with the various innovatory groups and sects which had appeared in Islam. Al-Malaṭī was more concerned with the major groups (whom he called innovators) and their development rather than with the nature and development of *bid'a* itself. He stated in his book his intention of enumerating all sects. The first groups who were said to have separated were the Zanādiqa (whom he sub-divided into five sects), the Jahmiyya (divided into eight), the Qadarites (divided into seven), the Murji'ites (divided into twelve), the Rāfiḍites (divided into fifteen), and finally the Khārijites (divided into twenty-five sects). The total therefore of the above sects is seventy-two.[31] He gave considerable attention to the Shī'ites, mainly because of his belief in the grave danger that these groups posed for Islam. In the words of al-Baghdādī, 'The harm caused by the Bāṭiniyya [i.e. the Shī'ites] to the Muslim sects is greater than the harm caused by Jews, Christians, and Magians.'[32] At that time also the Shī'ites were in a

powerful position on account of their adherents, the Fāṭimids, who had conquered Egypt in 358/969.[33] Thus we see that al-Malaṭī's book did not discuss the concept of *bid'a* in terms of definition and type, but instead it concentrated on the identification of above-mentioned groups of innovators.

5. Al-'Ukbarī:

In the same century in which al-Malaṭī lived (the fourth/tenth century), there also lived 'Ubayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥamdān b. Baṭṭa al-'Ukbarī who was born and died (304-387/917-997) in 'Ukbarā near Baghdad. He belonged to the Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence and, like most other scholars, he travelled widely in quest of learning, visiting Mecca and Basra where he met many scholars who imparted their knowledge to him. It is said that he became a *muftī* before he reached the age of fifteen and from this time onwards he produced over a hundred books.[34] The book with which we are here concerned is his *Kitāb al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna 'alā Uṣūl al-Sunna wa-'l-Diyāna* (The Book of Explanation and Elucidation in the Fundamentals of the *Sunna* and Religion). The treatise is principally concerned with *uṣūl al-Sunna* (the fundamentals of the *Sunna*), but at the end of the work he devotes a whole chapter to innovations and novelties. He paid the closest attention to certain practices which were current in his own time and, like al-Malaṭī, he concluded the chapter by referring specifically to certain groups whom he considered innovators and in contradiction of the

Sunna, such as the Khārijites, Shī'ites, Qadarites, Murji'ites, Jahmiyya, and Mu'tazilites. While in this work he only briefly gave the names and sometimes mentioned the leaders of these groups, more details of them can be found in his other book entitled *al-Ibāna 'an Sharī'at al-Firqa al-Nājīya wa-Mujānabat al-Firqa al-Madhmūma* (The Elucidation of the Safe Sect's Creed and the Avoidance of the Blameworthy Sect). The first book would appear in fact to be an abridgment of this second one, so that the first is referred to by scholars as *al-Ibāna al-Ṣughrā* (The Small Elucidation) while the second is referred to as *al-Ibāna al-Kubrā* (The Large Elucidation). Indeed, the famous contemporary scholar al-Albānī has said, 'It seems likely that *al-Ibāna al-Ṣughrā* is an abridgment of *al-Ibāna al-Kubrā.*'[35] Moreover, al-'Ukbarī actually stated in his introduction to *al-Ibāna al-Ṣughrā* that he had 'written the texts (*mutūn*) without their chains (*asānīd*) in order to shorten the book. Consequently, the book will be easier for the readers and the listeners.'[36] For this reason, our discussion will be based on the abridgment, with special reference to *al-Ibāna al-Kubrā* where necessary.

6. Al-Baghdādī:

Towards the end of the fourth/tenth century lived 'Abd al-Qādir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, who, as his name suggests, was born in Baghdad, although the date of his birth is unknown. Al-Baghdādī belonged to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence. He was a

respected *imām* and a knowledgeable person in the science of jurisprudence (*'ilm al-fiqh*), the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*'ilm uṣūl al-fiqh*), and the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*). He became a distinguished scholar in Khurāsān, but he left the Khurāsānian city of Nīshāpūr for Isfarāyin because of the revolt of the Turkumans that broke out there. He died in Isfarāyin in 429/1037.[37] His most important book[38] and the one with which we are concerned is entitled *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* (The Differences between the Sects). It is an important treatise because in his account al-Baghdādī

> takes each sect separately, judges all from the standpoint of orthodoxy and condemns all which deviate from the straight path. It is not a plain tale of facts, like Shahrastānī's *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*, but a polemic. In spite of a chapter heading "Socrates and Plato" it deals only with Islam though it brands some aberrations as unworthy of the name. It ends with an exposition of orthodox belief.[39]

7. Al-Bayhaqī:

A younger contemporary of al-Baghdādī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mūsā al-Bayhaqī, was born in Nīshāpūr in 384/994 and, after his death in 458/1066, was buried in Bayhaq, not far from Nīshāpūr. He also belonged to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence. He travelled to Iraq, the Hejaz, and Khurāsān, where he was able to meet many scholars and become in his own right a famous scholar in

Ḥadīth and Shāfi'ite jurisprudence.[40] *Imām al-Ḥaramayn* al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) 'highly praised his writings in support of Shāfi'ī doctrine.'[41] It has been said that, towards the end of his life, al-Bayhaqī went up to Nīshāpūr 'where he taught traditions and transmitted his books. Al-Bayhaqī was a voluminous writer, his writings being said to have reached 1000 fascicules.'[42] The one of his books with which we are concerned is *al-I'tiqād wa-l'-Hidāya ilā Sabīl al-Rashād 'alā Madhhab al-Salaf wa-Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* (The Doctrine and Guidance to the Right Path based on the Creed of the Three Early Generations of Islam and the People of Tradition). The book sets out to be a discussion of theological topics such as the Unity of God and His attributes, paticularly as held by the *salaf* (the three early generations of pious Muslims) and Tradition, with a refutation of opposing groups such as the Mu'tazilites and the Jahmiyya. This general discussion of the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) contains two short chapters relevant to the present study, the first of which concerns the duty of adherence to the *Sunna* and avoidance of innovations, while the second concerns the prohibition of social intercourse with innovators. Thus al-Bayhaqī was only concerned with credal innovations and the necessity of refusing social intercourse with the innovators.

8. Al-Ṭurṭūshī:

A century later we have Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Walīd b.

Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Andalusī al-Ṭurṭūshī who was born *ca.* 451/1059. He was a scholar noted for the two important characteristics of piety and asceticism. In 476/1083 he travelled to the East in quest of knowledge from famous scholars. After first making the pilgrimage, he went on to Basra and Baghdad, after which he dwelt for some time in Syria. He died in Alexandria in 520/1126. His name al-Ṭurṭūshī is derived from his native city of Tortosa in Eastern Andalus , where the Mālikite school of jurisprudence was popularly held.[43] Al-Ṭurṭūshī was aware of what Ibn Waḍḍāḥ had taught and quoted him in his book as a traditionist (*muḥaddith*). The importance of al-Ṭurṭūshī's work *al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bida'* (Novelties and Innovations) is that it pays particular attention to the discussion of unfamiliar forms of *bid'a* which might not have existed earlier and had not therefore been considered by earlier scholars. Al-Ṭurṭūshi's ideas on *bid'a* had a significant influence later on Abū Shāma, despite the latter's belonging to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence.

9. Al-Shahrastānī:

Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad al-Fatḥ al-Shahrastānī was born in 479/1086 and died in 548/1153. He was a respected scholar in the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*), the science of jurisprudence (*'ilm al-fiqh*), and the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*'ilm uṣūl al-fiqh*).[44] His contemporary, al-Khwārizmī, said of him, 'There were

many debates which we had together and he was in favour of defending the philosophers' views.'[45]

His book with which we are here concerned, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal*, consists of three parts, the first of which deals with the seventy-three sects of Islam. The second and third parts discuss non-Islamic religions and philosophies. The first part of the book is an important source of information on the sects of Islam, yet unlike al-Ash'arī, al-Malaṭī, and al-Baghdādī, al-Shahrastānī merely reports the doctrines of the various sects from their own sources without any comment of his own.

10. Ibn al-Jawzī:

In the mid-sixth/twelfth century there flourished Abū al-Faraj b. al-Jawzī 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurashī al-Baghdādī who was born in 510/1116. He was a respected Ḥanbalite scholar on account of his evident knowledge. He composed many books in the fields of *Ḥadīth*, Koranic commentary (*tafsīr*), jurisprudence, history, and even medicine. One authority mentions that often his audiences would reach as many as a hundred thousand people in number.[46] This is undoubtedly an exaggeration, but it nevertheless testifies to his popularity. He was on excellent good terms with the Ḥanbalite vizier Ibn Hubayra who served the Caliph al-Mustanjid (555-566/1160-70).

In this encouraging atmosphere, Ibn al-Jawzī became one of the most influential preachers at a time when Ḥanbalism attained its greatest influence. He died during Ramaḍān in 597/1200.[47] At the commencement of his book *Talbīs Iblīs* (The Delusion of the Devil), a treatise surveying the deceptions of Satan, he devotes a small section to holding to the way of the *Sunna* and avoiding innovation and innovators. Like al-'Ukbarī and al-Malaṭī before him, he polemicizes against the various groups more or less on the margin of mainstream Sunnism, i.e. the Khārijites, Rāfiḍites, Mu'tazilites, philosophers, etc. However, he also directs his attention within Sunnism to all those whom he considered responsible for having introduced into the creed of Islam innovations which should be condemned.[48]

11. Al-Maqdisī:

In the late sixth/twelfth and early seventh/eighth centuries we have the work of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ismā'īl b. Manṣūr al-Maqdisī who was born in 569/1173 and died in 643/1245. He travelled much between Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo, in all of which places he was able to broaden his knowledge. He belonged to the Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence and became a distinguished scholar in the science of *Ḥadīth*.[49] Al-Dhahabī testified of al-Maqdisī that he 'was an *imām*, competent authority (*ḥujja*), and traditionist (*muḥaddith*) of Syria, the scholar of the *Sunna*, and the

point of reference in this subject.[50] He composed many books, particularly in the science of *Ḥadīth*. The book of his with which we are here concerned is his *Ittibā' al-Sunan wa-Ijtināb al-Bida'* (The Following of the *Sunna* and Avoidance of Innovations). This is a very short work concerned with some custom innovations such as the attending of song recitals, dancing sessions, and the company of beardless people. He was also concerned with the temptation (*fitna*) of looking at women and he laid emphasis on the necessity to follow the *Sunna* and avoiding innovation. As we know, al-Maqdisī specialized in the science of *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunna,* and it is probably for this reason that this work is merely a narrative composition containing selected verses from the Koran and passages from the *Sunna* without any in-depth discussion of these custom innovations.

12. Al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām:

A contemporary of al-Maqdisī, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd al-Salām b. Abī al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Sulamī, known as al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām, was born in 577/1181 and studied in Damascus where he learned various subjects such as the science of jurisprudence (*'ilm al-fiqh*), the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), and theology under the leading scholars of his time. After obtaining extensive knowledge, he taught in al-Ghazzāliyya school in Damascus.[51] He was also appointed to preaching duties (*khiṭāba*) in the Umayyad Mosque, a post which testifies

to the high academic standing which 'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām enjoyed. S.R. 'Ali commented that

> the *khiṭāba* (i.e. the post of addressing the public at the Friday mass prayer) at a chief mosque of any Muslim capital city was a respected and influential position at this period. The Umayyad mosque of Damascus, being one of the oldest great mosques (built in 82 A.H.) enjoyed high regard in the Muslim world.[52]

He was dismissed from this office when he criticized Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl, whereupon, in 639/1241, he left for Egypt where he was warmly welcomed by the sultan of Egypt, Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb (d. 647/1249). He taught in al-Ṣāliḥiyya school and was appointed as responsible person for the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence. He died in 660/1262 and was buried in Cairo.[53]

His book with which we are concerned is *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* (The Rules of Judgments for the Welfare Interests of Human Beings). It is a large book consisting of two volumes

> The subject of the works [*sic*] is an exposition of the foundations on which all the laws of the Sharī'a, including religious observances, are based. The theme is that the whole body of the Law tends to provide means for public welfare, in the wider sense of the word. More strictly, the book is concerned with this main foundation motive of the law.[54]

In the second volume al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām devoted a very small section to the definition of *bid'a* and the possibility of its division into five legal categories, namely obligatory, prohibited, recommended, undesirable, and permissible *bida'*.

13. Abū Shāma:

As we noted earlier in section 8, al-Ṭurṭūshī had an influence on Abū Shāma Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Uthmān al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī, who was born in 599/1202. He was a learned man who retained a humble air. He obtained his nickname Abū Shāma on account of the large mole (*shāma*) that was above his left eyebrow. He was an adherent of the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence, and died in 665/1266.[55] His book *al-Bā'ith 'alā Inkār al-Bida'* (The Motive behind the Denial of the Innovations) is similar to al-Ṭurṭūshī's book, although it contains additional information on the division of innovations into good and bad. It would appear that Abū Shāma was the first person to develop the idea of al-Shāfi'ī that innovations might be either good or bad.

14. Al-Qarāfī:

In the seventh/thirteenth century, we have Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Abī al-'Alā' Idrīs b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣanhājī al-Miṣrī al-Qarāfī, who died in 684/1285. He lived and died in Egypt and was buried in Qarāfa. Al-Qarāfī was a distinguished scholar in

the science of jurisprudence (*'ilm al-fiqh*) and the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Although he was himself a Mālikite, he studied at the feet of the Shāfi'ite scholar already referred to, al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām.[56] His book with which we are concerned is *Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwā' al-Furūq* (Lightning Flashes in the Storms of the Differences), but it is better known under its shorted title, *al-Furūq* (The Differences). This huge work is a discussion of the differences between the rules (*qawā'id*), one of which is the rule of *bid'a*. Al-Qarāfī therefore discussed the differences between the rules which prohibit *bid'a* and the rule which does not prohibit *bid'a*. Influenced by al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām, al-Qarāfī accepted the division of *bida'* into the five categories of obligatory, prohibited, recommended, undesirable, and permissible. In fact, his overall discussion is neither concerned with ritual or credal innovations, but with the legality of the five divisions of *bida'*.

15. Ibn Taymiyya:

In the same century as al-Qarāfī, i.e. the seventh/thirteenth century, we also have Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm b. al-Salām b. 'Abd Allāh b. Taymiyya al-Ḥarrānī, who was born in Ḥarrān in Syria in 661/1262. He moved with his family to Damascus in 676/1277 when the invading Tatars crossed the northern border of Syria. Ibn Taymiyya came from a family of scholars, but in addition to the intense academic interest of his family, he was personally blessed with an excellent memory and

sharp perception which enabled him to imbibe vast knowledge of the sources of Islam. He was an adherent of the Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence. He died in 728/1327.[57] The conditions of the Muslim world during Ibn Taymiyya's lifetime have been summarized by Ibn al-Athīr as follows:

> Islam and Muslims have during that period been afflicted by such disasters that no other nation had experienced. One such affliction was the invasion by the Tatar. They came from the East and inflicted overwhelming damages. Another was the onset of the Frankish people (God's curse be upon them) from the West to Mesopotamia and Egypt, and the occupation of its port, that is Damietta, which nearly subjected all of Egypt to their rule, had it not been for God's mercy and victory over them. But another affliction was that the Muslims themselves had been divided, and their swords lifted up against their fellows.[58]

Ibn Taymiyya's work perhaps reflects these turbulent events of his day.

His book, *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm wa-Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm* (The Need of the Straight Path and the Contradiction of the Followers of Hell-Fire), is a discussion of the Muslim festivals according to Islamic law and also of how certain festivals have suffered syncretistic innovations. M. Memon suggested that the book was written towards the end of Ibn Taymiyya's life, between 721/1321 and 727/1326, when he was concerned with external threats to the community as well as with the internal problems posed by some Islamic sects.[59] In addition, Ibn

Taymiyya expresses his concern over the negative influence of indigenous Christian and Jewish communities on Islamic practices and he is possibly the first scholar writing on *bid'a* to have taken such a deep interest in non-Muslim groups. His discussion of the concept of innovation and his attack against it may also be found in others of his books, such as *al-Jawāb al-Bāhir fī Zuwwār al-Maqābir* (The Brilliant Answer on the Visitors to the Graves). In this short work he atacked certain innovative practices such as intercession to saints and the visiting of graves by the people to pray there. His ideas on *bid'a* may further be found in his other works: *Kitāb al-Ziyāra* (The Book of the Visit) and *Qā'ida Jalīla fī al-Tawassul wa-'l-Wasīla* (The Respected Rule on Petition and Intercession).

16. Al-Turkumānī:

In the same century and under similar circumstances, we also find Ibn Taymiyya's pupil, Idrīs b. Baydakīn b. 'Abd Allāh al-Turkumānī al-Ḥanafī. Although there is no certain information on his dates of birth and death, nor on his geographical location, it does seem certain that he lived at the end of the thirteenth century, as is stated by the editor of his work on *bid'a,* Ṣubḥī Labīb. There is a good deal of evidence for this, but two details in particular point in this direction. Firstly, we have his own words of exhortation: 'O believer, you ought to be thankful to your Lord that He gives you the faith (*īmān*) by His grace after just a little over

seven hundred years,"[60] implying that his own era was approximately A.H. 700. Secondly, the transcriber of al-Turkumānī's work states that *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bida'* (The Book of Light Beams concerning Novelties and Innovations) was completed at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century.[61] Labīb is more specific, stating that al-Turkumānī wrote his treatise in 801/1397 at Mecca where

> he admitted openly that his Arabic was not exemplary, and that he had sought out the scholars of Mekka and the *Qaḍī* of the holy city, in order to hear their opinion of his attitude to the question of *bid'a,* as these questions touched all aspects of life, religious, political, social, as well as home and individual life.[62]

The work's importance is due to its author's discussion of the particular practices deemed *bid'a* current in his own time, such as his discussion of the associations of *futuwwa* (youth guilds) and mystics. Moreover, his attention encompassed even women's fashions, Turkish habits, and customs which he thought of as innovations and necessitating the faithful's avoidance.[63]

17. Ibn al-Ḥājj:

A century later, in the eighth/fourteenth century, there appears Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-'Abdarī al-Fāsī Abū 'Abd Allāh, known as Ibn al-Ḥājj. We know that he travelled widely and lived in Egypt. After having become blind and weak in body, at some time

past his eightieth year, he died in Cairo in 737/1336. Ibn al-Ḥājj belonged to the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. His book with which we are concerned was entitled *al-Madkhal* (The Introduction), published in four volumes. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī states of the book that it contains valuable and beneficial information because of its exposure of disgraceful practices and innovations which have been carelessly followed by certain people, practices most of which are utterly forbidden while the remainder may be judged as forbidden.[64] Ibn al-Ḥājj's book is readily classifiable as a jurisprudential reference work according to the Mālikite school, so that throughout its four volumes we find discussion from a juridical point of view of certain *bida'* practised during his time. We include Ibn al-Ḥājj's work in this study because he devotes some of his discussion to the religious festivals, particularly innovative festivals.[65]

18. Al-Shāṭibī:

Also active in the eighth/fourteenth century was Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Lakhmī al-Gharnāṭī al-Shāṭibī, who was born in Granada and became a distinguished scholar in the Mālikite school, particularly in the field of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (the theoretical science of jurisprudence), in which he wrote *Kitāb al-Muwāfaqāt* (The Book of the Agreements). He knew of Ibn al-Waḍḍāḥ and his book, which he quotes many times, and he also refers to al-Ṭurṭūshī. Al-Shāṭibī died in 790/1388.[66] His book *al-I'tiṣām* (The Adherence), which comprises two

large volumes, may be regarded as an encyclopedic reference work containing the most detailed treatment of the concept of *bid'a*. In it he devoted a large section to a refutation of the idea held by some people of the division of *bid'a* into good and bad.

19. Al-Wansharīshī:

In the following century, i.e. the ninth/fifteenth century, we have Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Wansharīshī al-Tilimsānī, who was a distinguished scholar of the Mālikite school. After coming into conflict with the government in Tlemcen, he escaped in 874/1469 to Fās, where he later died in 914/1508.[67] He wrote many books, the most famous being *al-Mi'yār al-Mu'rib wa-'l-Jāmi' al-Mughrib 'an Fatāwā 'Ulamā' Ifrīqiyā wa-'l-Andalus wa-'l—Maghrib* (The Arabicized Standard and the Comprehensive Collection of the Legal Opinions of Scholars of North Africa, Andalus, and Morocco). Not too concerned with innovation, this book is a collection of legal opinions (*fatwās*) filling twelve volumes. A small section on *bid'a* is to be found in the second volume.

20. Al-Suyūṭī:

In the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century, we have 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Sabq al-Dīn al-Khuḍayrī, known as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, who was born in 849/1445. He was brought up in Cairo as an orphan after his father had died when he was

only five years old. When he reached the age of forty, he secluded himself in a place on the Nile known as Rawḍat al-Miqyās and there he concentrated all his efforts into writing until his death in 911/1505. He was an *imām,* a historian, and a man of wide-ranging culture who wrote about six hundred books. He belonged to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence.[68]

His account with which we are concerned is *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā' wa-'l-Nahy 'an al-Ibtidā'* (The Order to Follow and the Prohibition of Innovations). This treatise is one of the most important Shāfi'ite accounts discussing the notion of *bid'a,* and in fact the whole of the book consists of a discussion of ritual innovations. There is indeed a similarity between al-Suyūṭī's book and Abū Shāma's account, since both are concerned with ritual innovations, particularly *bida'* that are unknown or unfamiliar to the mass of people.

It is important to note that book titles have not determined our selection of relevant materials on *bid'a.* For example, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar Shihāb al-Dīn al-Haythamī al-Sa'dī Abū al-'Abbās (909-974/1504-1567), who was a respected Shāfi'ite scholar,[69] wrote a book entitled *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqa fī al-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Zaygh wa-'l-Zandaqa* (The Burning Thunderbolts in the Refutation of Deviators and Atheists). It is a 'defence of the legitimacy of the offices of the first four caliphs against the claims of the

Shī'a.[70] Thus we must not be misled by the title which might suggest that it deals with the subject of deviation and innovation in a broad sense, while in fact it is limited to a refutation of Shī'ite views on the caliphate. It is true that the Shī'ites were considered to be innovators, but the book contains a narrow subject of debate and need not be dealt with here.

21. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb:

Approximately two centuries later, we have Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān al-Tamīmī, who was born in 1115/1703 in 'Uyayna in the region of Najd, and died in 1206/1792. His father held the office of *qāḍī* in 'Uyayna for some time. It was under his father that Muḥammad began his education in Ḥanbalite jurisprudence, in addition to *Ḥadīth* and Koranic interpretation. He travelled to Mecca on the pilgrimage and then went on to Medina where he studied under 'Abd Allāh al-Najdī and Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī. After returning from Medina to Najd, he travelled to Basra intending to go on from there to Syria. In Basra he studied *Ḥadīth, fiqh,* and Arabic grammar and also began his preaching there. As his message contained a strong attack against innovation, some people viewed him as a dangerous person preaching a radical line against established customs. As the opposition grew against him, he was expelled from Basra and decided to go to Syria. Losing his travel provisions on the way, however, he was forced to go back to Najd where he proclaimed his message to his people under the

protection of the governor of 'Uyayna, 'Uthmān b. Mu'ammar, who gave him his sister, al-Jawhara, in marriage.[71]

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb faced great opposition from his community because they had slipped back into many of the pagan practices of the pre-Islamic era. In order to understand the environment in which Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb began to proclaim his message, it is worth citing the following description of the prevailing conditions in Najd:

> The circumstances under which the movement originated and developed point to a number of factors which played an important role in moulding the reformist ideas of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. In the first place, he was pained to see his Arab compatriots well-nigh relapsing into the 'Day of Ignorance'. The author of *Rawḍat at-Afkār* [*sic*] devotes a long section in which he lists the superstitious beliefs and practices current in Arabia at the time, which savour of paganism. Besides paying excessive veneration to tombs and shrines, reverence was shown to sacred trees and stones and gifts of food were placed on graves.[72]

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb saw himself as continuing the work of Ibn Taymiyya. As Smalley states, he 'so loved Ibn Taimiya that he copied by hand all of his writings, [and] arose on the scene to carry out the same line of thought.'[73]

His *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (The Book of Monotheism) is not a discussion of the concept of *bid'a*, but rather of *tawḥīd* (monotheism).

However, it clearly identifies some of the acts which can be accounted as either credal or ritual innovations. While Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb did not devote any single work to the subject of *bidʿa,* his ideas on the subject can nevertheless be found in almost all the books written by him, as well as in his correspondence. Scattered through many of his writings were vigorous attacks against innovations.

22. Usuman dan Fodio:

In the latter part of the same century, we have 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad b. Fūdī, commonly referred to as Usuman dan Fodio (1168-1233/1754-1817), leader of the Fulani people in Sokoto (presently the Northern Region of Nigeria) and conqueror of neighbouring states under the banner of Islamic revivalism. In his early years he received the traditional Muslim education and commenced his revivalist preaching (*daʿwa*) in 1188/1774-5. Through his eloquence, he established a coterie of disciples.[74] He was an adherent of the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. His book entitled *Iḥyā' al-Sunna wa-Ikhmād al-Bidʿa* (The Revival of the *Sunna* and the Suppression of Innovation) is 'essentialy a textbook on theology, mysticism and law...his purpose was more to sift out the un-Islamic practices that had crept into these duties and to stress the importance of performing only the original practices.'[75] He emphasized the importance of adherenece to the *Sunna* and the removal of what he deemed Satanic innovation. The above book was the most significant

written by him in the Arabic language, but he also wrote another, unpublished work on *bid'a* which is entitled *Bayān al-Bid'a al-Shayṭāniyya* (The Explanation of Satanic Innovation) which 'is a short work of 14 folios, warning against the practice of common innovations. It is extracted from the works of Mālikī authorities, and forms a short compendium of Mālikī opinion on innovations.'[76]

Secondary Sources

In surveying the secondary sources used in this study, we will briefly describe the main contributions to the discussion of *bid'a* that have been made by European and Muslim scholars. Apart from Talbi's article (noted below), there is no historical survey of the concept of *bid'a* among the writers in Western languages. Similarly, although *bid'a* has been extensively discussed by Arab authors, they have shown little concern about the concept over an extended historical time. The secondary sources include all books, articles, and pamphlets which attempt to discuss *bid'a* as it has been understood from the primary sources and they are often helpful in the present study. They may be divided into two categories. We will begin by mentioning the books and articles by European writers which seem to be the most significant.

The second volume of Ignaz Goldziher's *Muslim Studies* contains two chapters relevant to this study, entitled "*Hadīth* and *Sunna*" and "The Veneration

of Saints in Islam". The discussion is also furthered in his *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* under the heading "Later Developments" where he states,

> It was in this fashion that the need for a *sunna* became a "representative emotion" in Islam. The whole concern of the pious and faithful was to conform to the *sunna* of the Companions, to act only as the *sunna* prescribed, and to shun all that might contradict it or that had no foundation in it. If anything contradicted - or, in a strictrer view, was not identical with - ancient usage (the *sunna*), they called it *bid'a,* "innovation" whether it had to do with belief or with the most trivial aspects of daily life.[77]

Discussion of *bid'a* can also be found in an article written by B. Lewis, entitled "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam". Here he briefly discusses heresy in early Islam, particularly among the Khārijites and Shī'ites whose movements were largely consolidated between the death of the Prophet and the fall of the Umayyad caliphate. Commenting on synonyms of *zandaqa,* he noted that in early Islam the word *zandaqa* was itself

> at first applied to Manichaeans and related groups, more especially to those who held dualist doctrines while making nominal profession of Islam. Later it was generalised to cover all holders of unorthodox, unpopular and suspect beliefs, particularly those considered dangerous to the social order and the state. At the same time it was applied loosely to the materialists, atheists, agnostics, and the like, and came to have the general meaning of free-thinker and libertine.[78]

So the term *zandaqa* appears to be stronger than the term *bid'a.* This is because

zandaqa was most commonly used to designate something severe such as denial of fundamental doctrines, and also the accusation of *zandaqa* is stronger than the accusation of *ibtidā'* in general.[79]

J. Taylor's article entitled "An Approach to the Emergence of Heterodoxy in Medieval Islam" briefly discusses the emergence of sects in Islam and their development. The explanation of sectarianism is found in the statement that 'once the catholicity of Islām was forgotten in either *Sunnī* or *Shī'ī* communities, the way was open for the sect to develop and for some individuals to degenerate further into heresy.'[80]

A discussion of the development of innovation is found in M. Talbi's article in French, "Les Bida". He explains that the concept of *bid'a* was conceived (rather than born) during the period of the Companions. Regarding them as the most significant sources, he relied heavily on the works of al-Ṭurṭūshī (which he later edited) and Abū Shāma.

There are also a number of other Western books and articles which need not be enlarged on here in detail but which have still proved useful.[81]

The secondary sources in Arabic are more relevant and informative than those produced by European writers, yet most of them follow the same line of discussion, neglecting the occurrence of the idea over a long historical period

which, however, is of particular significance.[82]

1. 'Alī Maḥfūẓ's *al-Ibdā' fī Maḍar al-Ibtidā'* is a useful source of reference, but it is actually little more than a summary of al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tiṣām,* as 'Izzat 'Aṭiya has observed.[83]

2. Tawfīq Yūsuf al-Wā'ī's *al-Bid'a wa-'l-Maṣāliḥ al-Mursala* contains a reasonable section discussing the differences between *bid'a* and *al-maṣlaḥa al-mursala* (welfare advantage). The latter concept will be discussed later.

3. 'Izzat 'Alī 'Aṭiya's *al-Bid'a Taḥdīduhā wa-Muqīf al-Islām minhā* appears to be more important than other works on account of its analysis and assessment. Nevertheless, it suffers from the common weakness of neglecting the historical development of the subject.

4. Salīm al-Hilālī's tiny book entitled *al-Bid'a wa-Atharuhā al-Sayyi' fī al-Umma* is of limited use owing to its very brief length and also the fact that it relies heavily on al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tiṣām.*

5. Lastly, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Bāz's pamphlet *al-Taḥdhīr min al-Bid'a* is a *fatwā* (legal opinion) about certain practices such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, with supporting evidence from the Koran and *Sunna.*

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has been concerned with an exploration of the primary and secondary sources, in Arabic and other languages, that are used in the present study. The main conclusion to be derived from the survey is that almost all the secondary Arabic writings have not attempted to review the sources on *bid'a* presented by the Sunnite scholars, neither have they given any consideration to the historical development of the concept of *bid'a.* Therefore, an attempt will be made in the present work to provide an extensive examination of the concept, tracing it from its origins in the Koran, the *Sunna,* the Companions' traditions to the writings of later scholars.

Thus, in brief, we have surveyed the emergence and development of works concerned with the problem of *bid'a* between the third and twelfth centuries A.H., i.e. during a period of approximately 1000 years. These issues will be treated in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Muḥyī al-Dīn b. Ashraf al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn,* tr. Abd al-Rahman Shade (Lahore, Kazi Publications, 1988) I, 128.

2. Ṣubḥī Labīb, "The Problem of the *Bid'a* in the Light of an Arabic Manuscript of the 14th Century", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* VII (1964) 196 (brackets added).

3. *Ibid.*

4. Koran, 4 (al-Nisā'): 59. Two translationf of the Koran are used in the present study. The first, used most frequently, is *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary* by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Leicester, Islamic Foundation, 1975) and the second, used only occasionally, is *The Koran Interpreted* by Arthur J. Arberry (Oxford, O.U.P., 1986).

5. Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān,* ed. Aḥmad Shākir & Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo, Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1969–[in progress]) VIII, 495 f.

6. *Ibid.,* 504.

7. Mālik b. Anas al-Aṣbaḥī, *al-Muwaṭṭa',* tr. Aisha Bewley (London, Kegan Paul Intern., 1989) 380.

8. Koran, 33 (al-Aḥzāb): 40.

9. Koran, 46 (al-Aḥqāf): 9.

10. Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd wa-ma'ah al-Sunan li-'l-Khaṭṭābī,* ed. 'Izzat al-Da'ās & 'Ādil al-Sayyid (Ḥimṣ, Maṭba'at Dār

al-Ḥadīth, 1964-74) V, 13, no. 4607.

11. *Ibid.*, II, 169, cited in Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* tr. C.R. Barber & S.M. Stern (London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1971) II, 35 (with slight alteration based on a comparison with the Arabic text).

12. Muḥammad al-Talbi, "Les Bida'", *Studia Islamica,* XII (1960) 54 f. See also Muḥammad b. al-Walīd al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bida',* ed. M. al-Ṭālibī (Tunis, al-Maṭba'a al-Rasmiyya li-'l-Jumhūriyya al-Tūnisiyya, 1959) 6 f. Al-Ṭālibī produced a good edition of al-Ṭurṭūshī's book, containing a valuable introduction which is similar to his article "Les Bida'", but with a useful index and some important references on *bid'a.*

13. Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* (Beirut, Dar Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, *ca.* 1954) II, 646 f.

14. Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ, *Kitāb al-Bid'a wa-'l-Nahy 'anhā,* 2nd ed. (Beirut, Dār al-Rā'id al-'Arabī, 1982) 2-6. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's book has also been edited by Maria Isabel Fierro in an edition much superior to the Beirut edition, but Fierro's edition is in Spanish.

15. For information about the Ash'ariyya, see e.g. Jalāl Muḥammad Mūsā, *Nash'at al-Ash'ariyya wa-Taṭawwuruhā* (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1975); W.M. Watt, art. "Ash'ariyya", *EI*².

16. The Mu'tazilites were a group who emerged during the time of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (21-110/641-728). They became very influential, particularly during the reign of the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma'mūn (170-218/786-833). They relied heavily on the metaphorical method of interpreting (*ta'wīl*) the Koran and the *Sunna* and

this led them to deny the real attributes of God mentioned both in the Koran and the *Sunna.* For further details about the Mu'tazilites, see 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn,* ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1950) I, 216–311; W.M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London, Luzac, 1948) 61–69.

17. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā,* ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī & 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥulw (Cairo, Maṭba'at 'Īsā al-Ḥalabī, 1964–76) III, 347.

18. *Ibid.,* 348.

19. *Ibid.*

20. W.M. Watt, art. "al-Ash'arī", *EI*².

21. A.J. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed,* 2nd ed. (London, F. Cass, 1965) 87.

22. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya,* III, 352.

23. See *ibid.,* 347–353.

24. The Qadarites were a group who emerged later than the Khārijites and Shī'ites, approximately towards the end of the first century of Islam. They affirmed the doctrine of *qadar* (destiny) and another important article of their belief was that good things are from God while bad things are from Satan. They also believed that man creates his own actions. For further information, see e.g. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd 'alā al-Ahwā' wa-'l-Bida',* ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Beirut & Baghdad, al-Ma'ārif & Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1968) 165–177; J. van Ess, art. "Ḳadariyya", *EI*².

25. The Khārijites were a group who emerged during the conflict between 'Alī

and Mu'āwiya following the murder of the Caliph 'Uthmān. The Khārijites were originally within the 'Alid camp, but when it was proposed that two referees should reach a judgment (*taḥkīm*) in order to solve their dispute, a group of people in the 'Alid camp refused the proposal and went out (*kharajū*), thereby obtaining their name Khārijites. They later split among themselves, according to al-Malaṭī, into twenty-five groups. One important article of their faith which was contrary to that of the Sunnites was their description of anyone who commits a grave sin as an infidel (*kāfir*). For further information about the Khārijites, see e.g. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn,* I, 156-196; al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd,* 47-54, 178-185; G. Levi della Vida, art. "Khāridjites", *EI*²; Julius Wellhausen, *The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam,* tr. R.C. Ostle & S.M. Walzer, ed. R.C. Ostle (Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1975) 1-88.

26. The Shī'ites emerged as a group during the conflict betwen Mu'āwiya on the one side and 'Alī's sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn on the other. Contrary to the Sunnites, the Shī'ites believe that the *Imām* (leader) of the Muslim community must be a direct descendant of 'Alī. Another important article of their faith, which is also contrary to Sunnite doctrine, is their belief that the *Imām* is a sinless person. According to al-Malaṭī, the Rāfiḍites (i.e. the Shī'ites) became sub-divided into fifteen groups. Some scholars, however, divide them into four main groups, each being further divided into many branches. Such was the view, for example, of al-Ash'arī who used the term Rāfiḍites to describe one of the major branches of the Shī'ites. Another scholar, al-Baghdādī, divided the Rāfiḍites into twenty groups. For more information, see e.g. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*

al-Islāmiyyīn, I, 65–156; al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd,* 18–35, 156–165; 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* (Beirut, Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1973) 22–54. See also S. Husain Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London, Longman, 1979); Moojan Momen, *An Intoduction to Shi'i Islam and History and Doctrines of the Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven & London, Yale Univ. Press, 1985); Wellhausen, *Factions in Early Islam,* 95–165; Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'iḥ al-Baṭṭāniyya,* ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī (Cairo, al-Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1964).

27. The Murji'ites emerged as a group during the Umayyad caliphate. The central contention of the Murji'ites concerned the doctrine of faith (*īmān*) of which they favoured a solifidian view in contrast to the Khārijites who believed that gross sins rendered one an infidel (*kāfir*). For further information, see e.g. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn,* I, 197–215; A.J. Wensinck, art. "Murdji'a", *EI*[1].

28. Al-Jahmiyya is the name applied to a group founded by Jahm b. Ṣafwān during the Umayyad caliphate. One article of their faith is the creation of the Koran. For further information, see e.g. al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd,* 98–137; 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī, *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Jahmiyya* (Leiden & London, E.J. Brill & C.W.K. Cleerup, 1960); W.M. Watt, art. "Djahmiyya", *EI*[2].

29. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya,* III, 77 f.

30. Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd, dal.*

31. *Ibid.,* 91.

32. Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq,* 265.

33. See M. Canard, art. "Fāṭimids in Egypt", *EI*².

34. ʻAbd al-Ḥayy b. al-ʻImād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man Dhahab* (Beirut, Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, n.d.) III, 122-4.

35. Nāṣir al-Din al-Albānī, *Fahrasat al-Maktaba al-Ẓāhiriyya al-Ḥadītha,* 31 f., cited in al-ʻUkbarī, *al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna ʻalā Uṣūl al-Sunna wa-'l-Diyāna,* ed. Riḍā al-Muʻṭī (Mecca, al-Maktaba al-Fayṣaliyya, 1984) 74. Al-Muʻṭī has produced an excellent edition of al-ʻUkbarī's work, comparable to Labīb's edition of al-Turkumānī's work in terms of its exhaustive introduction and helpful comments.

36. *Ibid.,* 104.

37. Al-Subkī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʻiyya,* V, 136-9.

38. He wrote many books including *Kitāb al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal,* ed. Albīr Nādir (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʻArabī, 1988). This small book is similar to his larger work *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq.* Nādir (the editor) rejects the idea that *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l'-Niḥal* is an abridgment of the larger book. Because of their similarity, however, we will refer for our purposes to the larger book.

39. A.S. Tritton, art. "al-Baghdādī", *EI*².

40. Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʻyān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān,* ed. Iḥsān ʻAbbās (Beirut, Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968-72) I, 75 f.

41. J. Robson, art. "al-Bayhaḳī", *EI*².

42. *Ibid.*

43. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʻyān,* IV, 262-5.

44. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiyya,* VI, 128–130.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab,* IV, 329–331.

47. See H. Laoust, art. "Ibn al-Djawzī", *EI²*.

48. *Ibid.*

49. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Shihāb b. Rajab, *al-Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqī (Cairo, Dār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1952) II, 236 f.

50. *Ibid.,* 238.

51. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya,* VIII, 209–211.

52. Sayyid Rizwan Ali, *Izz al-Din al-Sulami: his Life and Works* (Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute, n.d.) 11.

53. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya,* VIII, 210 f. See also S.R. Ali, *Izz al-Din al-Sulami,* 13–16.

54. S.R. Ali, *Izz al-Din al-Sulami,* 50.

55. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ,* IV, 1460 f.

56. Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī b. Farḥūn, *Dībāj al-Mudhahhab fī Ma'rifat A'yān 'Ulamā' al-Madhhab,* ed. Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī Abū al-Nūr (Cairo, Dār al-Turāth, 1972–6) I, 236–9.

57. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-'l-Wafayāt,* ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1931–72) VII, 15–19.

58. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1965 [also Leiden, 1967]) XII, 137 f., cited in Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: the Social*

Factor (Chico, California, Scholars Press, 1983) 10.

59. See Muhammad Memon, *Ibn Taimiyah's Struggle against Popular Religion,* with an annotated translation of his *Kitāb Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm wa-Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm* (The Hague, Mouton, 1976) 7.

60. Idrīs b. Baydakīn al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bida'*, ed. Ṣ. Labīb (Cairo, Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1986) 162. Labīb's edition is an excellent achievement containing a lengthy introduction on the nature of al-Turkumānī's work. Some of the material was presented earlier in a separate article (see above note 2), but this introduction in Arabic contains much more than is to be found in the English article.

61. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 479.

62. Ṣ. Labīb, "The Problem of the *Bid'a*", 191.

63. *Ibid.*, 192 f.

64. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mi'a al-Thāmina* (Beirut, Dār al-Jīl, *ca.* 1978) IV, 237.

65. We have taken the work of Ibn al-Ḥājj to be another work on *bid'a* although it deals also with questions of *ḥisba* (the regulation of public order). Thus, while it is listed by Maria Isabel Fierro in her study of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Kitāb al-Bida'* among important works on innovations (*Tratado contra las Innovaciónes* [Madrid, C.S.I.C., 1987] 119), Cl. Cahen and M. Talbi list it among works on *ḥisba* (art. "Ḥisba", *EI*²). The work is in fact concerned with both *bida'* and the moral behaviour of the community, or, as Cahen and Talbi put it, it is 'on public morality and against *bid'a*.' It should be noted that in the present

study *ḥisba* works are not dealt with since, while works on *bidʿa* commonly deal with actions linked with sacred places, *ḥisba* works, according to Cahen and Talbi, treat of 'moral behaviour and more particularly of the markets.'

66. Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām,* 3rd ed. (Beirut, n. publ., 1969) I, 71.

67. *Ibid.,* I, 255 f.

68. *Ibid.,* IV, 71.

69. *Ibid.,* I, 223.

70. C. van Arendonk & J. Schacht, art. "Ibn Ḥadjar al-Haythamī" *EI*².

71. Ḥusayn b. Ghannām, *Tārīkh Najd al-musammā Rawḍat al-Afkār wa-'l-Afhām,* ed. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad & 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Shaykh (Riyadh, n. publ., 1982) I, 75–79.

72. Muʿinuddin Ahmad Khan, "A Diplomat's Report on Wahhabism of Arabia", *Islamic Studies,* VII (1968) 35.

73. W.F. Smalley, "The Wahhabis and Ibn Saʿud", *Muslim World,* XXII (1932) 228 (brackets added).

74. See J. Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London, O.U.P., 1970) 195. See also Ismaʿil Ayinla Babatunde Balogun, *A Critical Edition of Iḥyā al-Sunna wa-Ikhmād al-Bidʿa of 'Uthmān b. Fūdī popularly known as Usumanu dan Fodio*, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968, 25.

75. I.A.B. Balogun, "Features of *Iḥyā al-Sunna wa-Ikhmād al-Bidʿa* of Uthman b. Fodiye", *Res. Bull. Cad Ibadan,* VI (1970) 15.

76. Mervyn Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and*

African Studies, XXV (1962) 577.

77. Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law,* tr. Andras & Ruth Hamori, with an introduction and critical notes by Bernard Lewis (Princeton, U.P., 1981) 232.

78. B. Lewis, "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam", *Studia Islamica,* I (1953) 54 f.

79. L. Massignon, art. "Zindīḳ", *SEI.*

80. John Taylor, "An Aproach to the Emergence of Heterodoxy in Medieval Islām", *Religious Studies,* II (1967) 198.

81. See e.g. J. Robson, art. "Bid'a", *EI²*.

82. Minor Arabic writings which are not given particular notice here include: Muḥammad al-Shuqayrī, *al-Sunan wa-'l-Mubtada'āt al-Muta'alliqa bi-'l-Adhkār wa-'l-Ṣalawāt* (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1988); Aḥmad Ban'alī, *Taḥdhīr al-Muslimīn 'an al-Ibtidā' wa-'l-Bid'a fī al-Dīn,* 2nd ed. (Kuwait, Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1982); and Ṣāliḥ al-Suḥaymī, *Tanbīh Ūlī al-Abṣār ilā Kamāl al-Dīn wa-mā-fī al-Bida' min al-Akhṭār* (Riyadh, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1989).

83. 'Izzat 'Alī 'Aṭīya, *al-Bid'a Taḥdīduhā wa-Mawqif al-Islām minhā,* 2nd ed. (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1980) 11.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEANING OF THE TERM *BID'A:* AN ANALYSIS OF ITS USAGE IN THE KORAN AND *SUNNA*

In this chapter we are going to cover the Koranic verses which relate to the concept of *bid'a,* the Prophetic traditions, and the traditions of the Companions which form the basic religious and cultural sources of the Muslim community. Although the materials in these sources do not provide an explicit definition of *bid'a,* they nevertheless provide the raw materials upon which the definition and understanding of *bid'a* may be established.

Before, however, we proceed to discuss the Koranic verses, we should note that the pagans of the pre-Islamic era used *bid'a* to assert that Islam was an innovating religion which contradicted their traditional religion. It was used, for example, when the new Muslims at the inception of Islam took refuge for a time with the Negus (Ethiopian king). When the Quraysh heard about the emigration of the new Muslims, they sent a delegation to the Negus saying,

> There are some heedless fellows who apostatize from our traditional religion, yet they have not been converted to your religion [Christianity]. They [the

Muslims] innovate (*ibtada'ū*) a new religion which has been recognized neither by us nor by you. Therefore, please would you send them back with us to their honourable fathers, uncles, and tribespeople who have commissioned us to bring them back...[1]

The Koran

Now we will proceed to examine the first basis of Islamic faith, i.e. the Koran, and consider also the views of the earliest commentators on it, such as those of al-Ṭabarī (224-310/838-922) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372) who compiled an abridgment of the *tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī. These commentaries employ a methodology considered by Muslims to be the most adequate and appropriate. Their method of interpretation is *tafsīr bi-'l-riwāya* (commentary by transmission), also known as *tafsīr bi-'l-ma'thūr*, i.e. the interpretation of the Koran by the Koran as the first stage of exegesis. It has been said that this

> is the highest source of *tafsīr*. Many of the questions which may arise out of a certain passage of the Koran have their explanation in other parts of the very same book, and often there is no need to turn to any sources other than the word of Allah.[2]

A second method is to interpret the Koran by reference to Prophetic Tradition (*Sunna*), while a third stage is to interpret the Koran by reference to the views of the Prophet's Companions. Furthermore, as Ibn Khaldūn remarked,

these (explanations) were transmitted on the authority of the men around Muḥammad and were circulated by the men of the second generation after them on their authority... The traditional information concerning them, which had come down from the men around Muḥammad and the men of the second generation, was transmitted farther. That (material) reached at-Ṭabarī...[3]

Beginning with stage one, we note that the word *bid'a* as a noun does not appear in the Koran. However, three words, derived from the root *b–d–'*, do appear in the Koran in four different contexts. These passages are:

> 1) To Him is due the primal origin (*badī'*) of the heavens and earth: How can He have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things.[4]

> 2) To Him is due the primal origin (*badī'*) of the heavens and the earth: when he decreeth a matter, He saith to it: 'Be,' and it is.[5]

These two verses are similar and interpreters of the Koran such as al-Ṭabarī stress that the word *badī'* in both verses means, in this context, that He (Allāh, the Exalted One) is the Creator and Originator of the heavens, earth, and everythng in them, before anyone could create or invent them or anything similar to them. This being understood, al-Ṭabarī commented, 'We can call a person who invents something new in religion (*al-dīn*) an innovator, meaning that he is the first to devise an innovation.'[6] But in this respect al-Ṭabarī goes beyond the general relgious sense of the term *bid'a* and ascribes to the term a specific religious meaning in a 'legal' sense.

> 3) I am not an innovation (بدعاً) among the Messengers and I know not what shall be done with me or with you. I only follow what is revealed to me; I am only a clear warner.[7]

This verse was understood by Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid, two of the earliest transmitters of Prophetic traditions, as meaning that the Prophet was directed to say that he was not the first Messenger to be sent to people and that he was not therefore an innovator in religion.[8] Consequently, neither was his message an innovation.

The final example is somewhat more complex:

> 4) But the monasticism (*rahbāniyya*) which they invented (*ibtada'ūhā*) for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the good pleasure of God; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet we bestowed, on those among them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors.[9]

This verse seems to hold a special significance for our discussion, as it alludes to events that are said to have taken place before Islam, when certain Christian monastics invented a new way of worship for themselves. Ibn Kathīr relates a tradition according to which, the nation of Israel was divided into seventy-two sects. But there were three sects among them who were saved and these were those who stood up against the oppressive kings after the death of Jesus and called for the establishment of the religion of Allāh and the message of Jesus. These three sects fought for their religion, but were all ultimately destroyed or

vanished from the scene. The last group, who were still able to propagate their faith, chose however to retreat to a mountain to worship at a holy shrine. It is to this last group that the Koranic verse is said to refer. Ibn Kathīr condemns this group on account of their innovations. His objection is that they had invented a new element of religion on two counts: first, their act of withdrawal from society; and, second, by withdrawing, their failure to propagate their message among the people.[10] These two failings are reflected in the words, 'they did not foster as they should have done.'

We may draw some general conclusions from the above four verses. While the first three of them do not provide us with a perfectly clear conception of the actual content of *bid'a,* the fourth verse, even though it uses a derived verbal form of the basic root, nevertheless gives a clearer indication of what is involved in *bid'a.* The verse has in view a group of people who invented something new in religion, but the precise nature of this innovation is complicated by the occurrence in the verse of the *hapax legomenon, rahbāniyya,* usually rendered 'monasticism'. There exists a famous *ḥadīth* which is of assistance in understanding the meaning of this term:

> It has been narrated on the authority of 'Urwa who said: 'Uthmān b. Maẓ'ūn's wife who, I think, was called Khawla, entered 'Ā'isha's house in a distressed state. When 'Ā'isha asked her what was the matter, she said, 'My husband fasts during the day and prays in the night (makes *tahjūd*).' At that moment the Prophet entered the house, whereupon 'Ā'isha told him of Khawla's complaint. When the Prophet met 'Uthmān, he told him that *rahbāniyya* is not prescribed for us...[11]

The usage of the term *rahbāniyya* in this context indicates that it describes an excess of worship which, not being prescribed in the *Sharīʿa,* is condemnable.

Three observations may be made concerning the four Koranic verses presented above: (1) The first and second verses exemplify the general sense of God as the originator (*badīʿ*) of the heavens, earth, and all else. (2) The third verse demonstrates a more specific religious sense of the derived word involving a normative message for mankind which is part of God's creation, as the Prophet Muḥammad said, 'I only follow what is revealed to me; I am only a clear warner.' (3) The fourth verse exemplifies the most specific use of a derived form of the verabl root, as it refers by it to the *rahbāniyya* of a particular religious group. Although the word *rahbāniyya* may be translated 'monasticism', it means more generally an excess in the practice of what has been prescribed by God. This conclusion is supported by the *ḥadīth* given above in which reference is made to one of the Companions who engaged so excessively in prayer and fasting that other duties became neglected, specifically his duty towards his wife. In addition, excessive piety (*rahbāniyya*) is not prescribed for Muslims, as the Prophet clearly stated.

Having examined those passages in the Koran in which the derived forms of *b–d–ʿ* and its derivation occur, we must now consider those passages in which the interpreters of the Koran discovered the concept of *bidʿa,* albeit the

word itself does not occur.

> 5) Verily, this is My way (*ṣirāṭī*) leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths (*al-subul*): they will scatter you about from His (great) path (*sabīlih*): thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous.[12]

Al-Ṭabarī suggested that the meaning of the phrase 'other paths' is innovations (*bida'*) and uncertainties (*shubahāt*). The same view was stated many times by Mujāhid (using different chains of transmission). Al-Ṭabarī also mentions a *ḥadīth* narrated on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, in which the Prophet one day drew a line for his Companions and said, 'This is the path of Allāh.' Then, it is said, he drew many lines to his right and left sides and said, 'On each of these paths is a Satan who calls for his way,' after which he recited the above verse.[13] One may deduce from al-Ṭabarī's interpretation that *bid'a* is a practice contrary to God's path.

> 6) This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.[14]

One of the earliest commentators on this verse, Mālik (93-179/711-795), appealed to this verse in demonstration that Islam had been perfected and completed, so that it is no longer possible to accept any innovation at all. The implication is that by accepting any innovation in religion, we are declaring that the Prophet Muḥammad (may the peace and the blessing of Allāh be upon him) did not deliver the message in its entirety, in direct contradiction of the above verse.

Another significant point to be made here is that Mālik let it clearly be understood that all *bidaʿ* must be rejected whether it be argued in particular cases that the *bidʿa* is good or bad, an issue which will be dicussed later in this study.[15]

> 7) As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with God: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did.[16]

The interpreters of this passage have various opinions among them concerning the actual sects in view who break up and divide their religion. Al-Ṭabarī mentions several views concerning the names of the sects involved. Some interpreters (such as Qaṭāda, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and Ibn ʻAbbās) apparenttly thought that the verse referred to Jews and Christians. Another group, however (which included Abū Hurayra, one of the earliest transmitters of the Prophetic Tradition), felt that it referred to innovators within the Islamic community (*al-umma*). Finally, al-Ṭabarī himself viewed the verse comprehensively as embracing and accommodating all the different religious groups, including Jews, Christians, adherents of Mazdaism (*Majūs*), and innovators within Islam.[17] At this stage, no clear notion of what actually constituted *bidʿa* existed, for the preceding three verses are not concerned with the nature of *bidʿa*. Nevertheless, one can see that the commentators up to al-Ṭabarī understood that *bidʿa* stood in contrast to the *Sunna*.

In respect of the later three verses, one might draw the general conclusion that by al-Ṭabarī's time the term *bidʿa* was clearly understood as

designating something contrary to a true form of beliefs and practices which, according to the Koran, had been established from the beginning because God had perfected His own religion as a true way contrary to innovations (*bida'*) and uncertainties (*shubāhāt*). However, the content of *bid'a* remained unknown in detail. Another significant point to be made here is that the Koran has recognized that all religions have suffered from sectarianism and innovations.

We are therefore left with the situation that the Islamic Scripture gives only a vague indication of the actual nature of *bid'a*. However, this is part and parcel of the nature of revelation as understood by early scholars, for revelation still requires scholarly effort to uncover details of what constitutes the true way and what constitutes innovation. It is not surprising that the Koran does not spell out every minute detail, because the primary aim of the Koran is to lay down general principles and guidelines that should regulate the relationship of man with man and his relationship with Allāh.[18]

Prophetic Traditions

Moving a step further in our investigations, we shall consider the concept of *bid'a* within the corpus of Prophetic traditions (*Sunna*), which explains and elaborates the Koranic text. In the sphere of legal evidence, *Sunna* constitutes an independent source of jurisprudence. The original meaning of *sunna* is 'a course, or way of life, behaviour, manner, model of life, or line of

conduct' whether good or bad.[19] The word *sunna* and its plural *sunan* occur sixteen times in the Koran and in all of these cases it covers a range of meanings, such as 'a law, ordinance, line of conduct, mode of life, punishment."[20] In support of the above, we may cite a specific passage from the Koran in which Allāh says, 'Now are they but looking for the way the ancients (*sunnat al-awwalīn*) were dealt with? But no change wilt thou find in God's way (*sunnat Allāh*) (of dealing)."[21] The word *sunna* can in fact be employed and understood in many ways. Firstly, there is the tribal *sunna,* which is secular. Thus, the word was used in the pre-Islamic era for

> the past customs and exemplary conduct left by their ancestors...Labīd b. Rabī'ah in his famous *mu'allaqah* [poem], says: ..(He comes) from a tribe for whom their ancestors have left a normative behaviour; every people has a *sunna* and its originator.[22]

Secondly, the word *sunna* may have a religious meaning, i.e. in reference to the behaviour of the previous Messengers, which ultimately is the *sunna* of God, a sense of the term which is exemplified in another verse of the Koran: '(such was) the practice (*sunna*) (approved) of God among those who lived aforetime: No change wilt thou find in the practice (*sunna*) (approved) of God."[23] Both the *sunna* of God and the tribal *sunna* are normative, but the difference between the first category and the second is the source of authority: the authority of the *sunna* in the pre-Islamic epoch was that of the tribe, while in the second category it is that of God. In addition, *sunna* can be used and understood in a legal context as the *sunna* of the Prophet which is expressed in the *Ḥadīth.* This last

sense will be referred to frequently in the study which follows.

In the Prophetic Tradition (the *sunna* of the Prophet), there are also employed in a sense parallel to that of *sunna,* words derived from the root *ḥ-d-th* and meaning 'new, recent, and novel' in the sense of innovation. *Ḥadīth* is not clearly defined contextually in the Koran and the *Sunna* as being a synonym of 'innovation', but the verbal noun *ḥudūth* means 'bringing into existence'.[24] Moreover, the term *muḥdathāt* is used of things invented by passion, as in the Prophetic *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet says, '...I warn you against novelties (*muḥdathāt*)...'[25] Furthermore, the literal meaning of the word *ḥadīth* is 'communication, conversation, and narration', a sense which is apparent in the *ḥadīth* in which Allāh says, 'When you hear God's signs being disbelieved and made mock of, do not sit with them until they plunge into some other talk (*ḥadīth*), or else you will surely be like them.'[26] So, by extension, the *Ḥadīth* which embodies the *Sunna* of the Prophet is basically 'communication' but in a technical, specific sense, i.e. the text (*matn*) and chain of authority (*isnād*) for sayings of the Prophet.

There remains the problem of defining the distinction between *Sunna* and *Ḥadīth,* since both terms are often used to convey the same meaning. To be more precise, however, '*Ḥadīth* is the narration of the behaviour of the Prophet while *Sunnah* is the law deduced from this narration. In other words, *Ḥadīth* is the 'carrier' and 'vehicle' of the *Sunnah. Sunnah* is contained in *Ḥadīth.*'[27]

Following this brief review of the terms *Sunna* and *Ḥadīth*, we turn now to examine the concept of *bidʿa* in the *Ḥadīth* literature in a broad sense. Islamic scholars have made a distinction between the Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth al-nabī*) and the Companions' traditions (*athar*s). This can be done by enumerating the famous Prophetical traditions, their implications, and some traditions of the Companions. This process will help us to arrive at a definition of *bidʿa* and its related concepts.

Most of the following *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s have been selected for discussion by the majority of writers on the concept of *bidʿa*. However, the question of the authenticity of *ḥadīth*s apparently deriving from the Prophet and his Companions arose both among the early Muslim scholars and again among modern Orientalists. Although the present selection of Prophetic *ḥadīth*s and Companions' *athar*s accords with the generally accepted corpus of Muslim scholars, the actual question of the traditons' authenticity is irrelevant to our discussion, since our purpose here is to consider the concept of innovation and how it was perceived and understood within the developing historical tradition of the community. We turn then to the actual *ḥadīth*s.

1) It is related by one of the Companions that the Prophet said in a famous *ḥadīth:*

> The best of speech (*ḥadīth*) is embodied in the Book of Allāh, and the best of

guidance is the guidance (*hudā*) given by Muḥammad. And the most evil affairs are innovation (*muḥdathāt*) and every innovation (*bid'a*) is error (*ḍalāla*).[28]

2) A similar *ḥadīth*, which contains the same formula in a different context, was recorded on the authority of a Companion who reported what the Prophet said in response to a request for his parting advice:

> The Prophet replied with these parting words... It is your duty to follow my *Sunna* for just and enlightened caliphs; bite this *Sunna* with your molars [i.e. cling closely to it]. I warn you against novelties (*muḥdathāt*), as every novelty (*muḥdatha*) is *bid'a*.[29]

3) Ibn Māja (209–273/824–886) quoted in his collection of traditions one of the earliest experts in *Ḥadīth*, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd who narrated that:

> The Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: The two most important things are speech and guidance. The best of speech (*kalām*) is embodied in the speech of Allāh [i.e. the Koran], and the best of guidance (*hudā*) is the guidance given by the Prophet Muḥammad. Oh beware of novelty (*muḥdatha*), for it is the most evil of affairs, as every novelty (*muḥdatha*) is innovation (*bid'a*) and every innovation (*bid'a*) is an error (*ḍalāla*)...[30]

There are no explanations provided for these *ḥadīth*s, but they may be considered as self-evident although they do not tell us anything about the specific content of *bid'a*. Here in these *ḥadīth*s we have three relevant terms: *muḥdathāt* (sing. *muḥdatha*), *bid'a*, and *ḍalāla*. Both *muḥdatha* and *bid'a* are condemnable in the *ḥadīth*s and both lead into error (*ḍalāla*). However, all of

these terms must be understood in a religious sense because all are contrary to God's speech, which is embodied in the Koran, and the guidance of the Prophet Muḥammad. It seems likely that in these *ḥadīth*s the term *muḥdatha* contains the same meaning as *bidʿa,* although as a noun the term *bidʿa* can be understood and used in a more specific religious sense. The term *ḍalāla* is a wide religious term which covers any diversion from the guidance and the right path, whether in dogma or ritual. The term occurs frequently in the Koran, for example when Allāh describes the people who conceal His revelations in the Book in these words: 'They are ones who buy error (*ḍalāla*) in place of guidance and torment in place of forgiveness.'[31] Similarly, in another passage, Allāh says, 'And who is more astray (*aḍall*) than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance (*hudā*) from God? For God guides not people given to wrongdoing.'[32] The above *ḥadīth*s expressed a similar meaning, placing emphasis on holding to the path of the Prophet and avoiding innovations.

4) A *ḥadīth* related on the authority 'Ā'isha, 'the mother of the faithful', reports that the Messenger of Allāh said,

> He who innovates (*aḥdath*) something in this matter of ours that is not of it will have it rejected.

In another version recorded by Muslim it reads:

> He who does an act which our matter is not (in agreement) with will have it rejected.[33]

Ibn Rajab (736-795/1335-1392), the later interpreter of *Kitāb al-Arba'īn,* a commentary on forty *ḥadīth*s, by al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), stated that this *ḥadīth* is one the basic foundations of Islam as it is the standard for assessing actions. Going further, he mentioned two conditions by which to assess the character of an action. Firstly, he asserted, one must seek God's pleasure through good intention; and secondly (relevant to our discussion), the action must be in agreement with Allāh's command and His Prophet's *Sunna.* By implication, therefore, whoever introduces some new element into religion which is inconsistent with the permission of Allāh (the Exalted One) and His Messenger must be rejected.[34] This *ḥadīth* is therefore evidence that the mere act of introducing something new is not to be rejected out of hand, but only if it is inconsistent with the *Sharī'a.*

5) In his collection of *ḥadīth*s, Ibn Ḥanbal quoted another tradition related by 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd who narrated that

> the Prophet said: You will be seized after me by people who will suppress the *Sunna,* bring forth innovation (*bid'a*), and delay prayer [by not performing it on time]. Ibn Mas'ūd said: O Prophet, what shall I do if I meet them? The Prophet said: O son of a mother's slave (*ibn umm 'abd*), there is no obedience at all due to a person who orders you to disobey Allāh. He [the Prophet] repeated the latter statement three times.[35]

This *ḥadīth* appears to indicate that innovation was anticipated in the years following the Prophet's death. This is not an unexpected phenomenon, as in every religion differences of opinion are bound to occur. However, there is a

further point which can be deduced from the words of the Prophet in this same *ḥadīth:* 'You will be seized after me by people who will suppress the *Sunna,* bring forth innovation, and delay prayer.' The Prophet specifically mentioned the act of delaying prayer at the proper appointed times. The *ḥadīth* thereby shows insight into the possible source of innovation, as it assumes that it may originate with a person in authority or someone held in high esteem, including the ruler himself. This may be understood from the Prophet's declaration that Muslims should not obey anyone who ordes them to disobey Allāh.

The above *ḥadīth* parallels another deriving from the same Companion, Ibn Mas'ūd, and explaining the best procedure for a scholar to adopt when the ruler introduces new elements into religion and demands that the people should practice them. The actual innovation of delaying prayer is illustrated in this *athar* referring to an occasion when, in the absence of al-Walīd b. 'Uqba, the governor of Kufa once delayed a prayer because of his duties:

> 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd led the people as the *imām* of prayer. As a result of this, al-Walīd asked Ibn Mas'ūd whether he had received permission from the commander of the faithful or whether he had introduced an innovation (*ibtada'ta*). 'Abd Allāh replied by saying: I have not received permission from the commander of the faighful nor have I introduced an innovation (*ibtada'tu*), but Allāh (the Exalted One) and His Prophet have not allowed the delaying of prayer while you are occupied with your duties.[36]

6) Moreover, this view is further substantiated by the following *ḥadīth* referring to the ruler's introducing a new element in religion, albeit with good intention, yet the scholars refused it because it had no basis in the Koran or *Sunna*. The *ḥadīth* stated,

> It has been narrated on the authority of 'Āṭif al-Thūmālī who said: I was sent to 'Abd al-Malik [the Umayyad caliph, *reg.* 65-86/685-705] and he said: O Abū Asmā' [father of Asmā'], I have gathered the people upon two matters. He [Abū Asmā'] said: What are they? The caliph replied that the first was the [preacher's] raising of [his] hands on the pulpit [in praying] on Friday, and the second was the telling of pious tales (*qiṣaṣ*) to the people after dawn (*fajr*) and afternoon (*'aṣr*) prayers. Abū Asmā' said: These are two examples of *bid'a* and I will not accept them. The caliph asked him why and he replied that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: If any people originate an innovation (*bid'a*), the *Sunna* will be removed from them. Therefore, holding to the *Sunna* is better than originating an innovation (*bid'a*).[37]

This *ḥadīth* is a reflection of confusion in the definition of *bid'a* as including the telling of pious tales (*qiṣaṣ*, sing. *qiṣṣa*) in the mosque. The caliph had appointed people to tell these tales without realizing that some people might view this as a kind of innovation. It has been reported that when a man asked Muḥammad b. Sīrīn about story-telling, he replied, 'It is an innovation! The first to introduce story-telling (*qaṣaṣ*) were allegedly the Khārijites.'[38] Ibn al-Jawzī (510-597/1116-1200) relates that

> The Khārijites were so engrossed in story-telling that it distracted them from the study of the Koran and from attempting to understand it; they preferred rather their own personal opinions (*ārā'*). It was for this reason that they were censured.[39]

Moreover, the rejection of story-telling may perhaps be linked with the conduct of the people who were delivering false stories.[40] Two further points may be demonstrated from the above *ḥadīth*. The first is that there is no absolute obedience due to a ruler if his orders contradict the teaching of the *Sunna*. This may be deduced from the narrator's refusal of the ruler's order concerning the matter of telling tales and the preacher's raising his hands on the pulpit on Friday. The second point is that the *Sunna* is in danger of being diminished by the introduction of an innovation. This is due to the nature of the Islamic religion which orders its adherents to follow what has been revealed to them, i.e. the Koran and the *Sunna*.

The Companions' Traditions

In the generation after the Prophet, many more *ḥadīth*s involving the concept of *bidʿa* are found deriving from the Companions and the generation of the successors than are derived from the Prophet himself. We must now consider some of these *athar*s of the Companions which have been used to condemn *bidʿa*.

1) It has been narrated on the authority of 'Uthmān b. Ḥāḍir al-Azdī who said:

> I entered the presence of Ibn 'Abbās [a Companion of the Prophet] and asked him for his advice. He said: Fear Allāh, become correct on the straight path, follow the Book of Allāh and His Prophet, and do not introduce innovation.[41]

This *athar* simply emphasizes the necessity of following the Koran and the

Sunna while avoiding introducing innovation, but does not refer to any specific innovation or the content of the innovation.

> 2) It has been reported that [the Caliph] 'Umar ordered his people to cut down the tree under which the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) between the Prophet and his Companions was made. The reason for cutting it down was that people usually go to pray for grace [in sacred places] and 'Umar was afraid that this tree might therefore cause mischief.[42]

This *athar* is an indication that *bid'a* was anticipated during 'Umar's lifetime (d. 23/643). He, therefore, as the ruler and responsible person to plan for the best interests of people according to the commandment of God and His Prophet, ordered his people to cut down the tree in order to prevent possible ritual innovation in the future; he was concerned lest people come to venerate the tree itself in imitation of pagan practices.

> 3) It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd who said: I passed by a woman who had a rosary which she used in her supplications. Therefore, I cut up her rosary and threw it away. Then I passed by a man who used pebbles in his supplication. Therefore Ibn Mas'ūd struck him on his feet and said: The Companions were before you. You are either committing an innovation (*bid'a*) or declaring that you are more learned than the Companions of the Prophet.[43]

A specific item or innovation is identified in this *athar*, i.e. the use of pebbles or rosaries in ritual prayers of supplication. The following important *athar*, which reflects the Companions' treatment of such an innovator, will illuminate and develop the above.

> 4) It has been reported that a man called Ṣābigh al-'Irāqī asked many questions which caused doubts concerning the Koran in the Muslim army. Consequently, [the Caliph] 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had him brought and said to him: You asked for a novelty (*muḥdatha*). Then 'Umar asked for wet palm-branches stripped of their leaves and with these he whipped him until his back bore many bruises. 'Umar left him for some time until his back was healed, after which he did the same thing again, but on the third occasion Ṣābigh said: O 'Umar, if you want to kill me, please kill me in a humane way. But if you want to cure me, I wish to say that I am cured. 'Umar then released him to go back to his land and ordered the people not to talk or to sit with him. This punishment was lifted from him [Ṣābigh] when he repented.[44]

If we accept this *athar* as recording a genuine historical event, it demonstrates that 'Umar took a very hard line with any innovation which cast doubt on the Koran.

If we examine all the above *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s, we see very clearly that they are all concerned with the condemnation of innovation in general or specific aspects of *bid'a* in ritual which are linked in one way or another to prayer. In certain other *ḥadīth*s, however, there seems to be indicated the condemnation of certain groups of people who are viewed as innovators, although the traditions do not contain specific details.

> On the authority of Zayd b. Wahb al-Juhanī, who was among the squadron which was under the command of 'Alī and which set out [to curb the activities] of the Khārijites, it is reported that 'Alī said: O people, I heard the Messenger of Allāh say: There will arise from my *umma* a people who will recite the Koran, and your recital will seem insignificant as compared with their recital...

> They will swerve through [from ?] Islam just as the arrow passes through the prey...[45]

In another *ḥadīth* concerning another sect, which is narrated by the Caliph 'Umar, it is reported that the Prophet said,

> Do not sit with the Qadariyya or engage in a dialogue with them.[46]

In the first *ḥadīth* the name of the group is not mentioned. However, the characteristics of this group are described and these characteristics helped the Companions to identify the group in question as the Khārijites. The second *ḥadīth* does mention the name of the innovating group. Furthermore, both these groups were described by the early generations of Islam and their successors as innovators.

We may draw the general conclusion that *bid'a* has been condemned according to the *Sunna* and this conclusion leads us to the further question: What is the definition of *bid'a?*

The scholars who specialized in the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the experts in the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*'ulamā' uṣūl al-fiqh*) held different views on the definition of *bid'a.* This is due to their particular understanding of the Scripture and Tradition. So there were divergent views as to whether *bida'* could be either good or bad in particular instances, or whether it was wholly bad. In the first camp were al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/819) and al-Nawawī (d.

676/1278) who also belonged to the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence. Al-Shāfi'ī said,

> *Bid'a* can be divided into two categories. The first one is innovation which contradicts the Koran, the *Sunna, ijmā'* (legal consensus), and *athar*s. This is what we call bad innovation. However, the second one is to introduce something new which does not contradict the above-mentioned [authorities]. This is a good innovation.[47]

Al-Nawawī defined *bid'a* as anything new being invented after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad and he too agreed on the division between good and bad *bida'*.[48] Their firmest evidence for this belief probably rests on one particular *ḥadīth* and one *athar*. The *ḥadīth* states that

> he who introduces (*sanna*) some good practice (*sunna ḥasana*) in Islam which is followed after him [by the people], he will be assured of reward like the one who follows it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. But he who introduces some evil practice (*sunna sayyi'a*) in Islam which is followed subsequently [by others], he will be required to bear the burden like that of one who followed this [evil practice] without theirs being diminished in any respect.[49]

The *athar* in turn asserts,

> On the authority of 'Abd al-Qāri', who said: I went out in the company of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb one night in Ramaḍān to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups: a man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. So, 'Umar said: In my opinion, it is better to gather these people under the leadership of one *qāri'* (reciter) [i.e. let them pray in congregation!]. So, he made up his mind to gather them behind Ubayy

> b. Ka'b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. At this, 'Umar remarked: What an excellent *bid'a!*...[50]

This evidence was adduced by al-Shāfi'ī and al-Nawawī to demonstrate the possiblity of a division between good and bad *bida'*. In doing so, they depended heavily on 'Umar's verdict, 'What an excellent *bid'a!*'

There was, however, another major group of jurists who viewed *bid'a* as being wholly evil. We may mention some of the exponents of this opinion. Mālik b. Anas (93-179/711-795) disliked *bid'a* in general, even if it appeared to be beneficial. He was recorded as saying that he disliked visiting the graves of martyrs because he was afraid that the masses would take this practice to be an essential part of the *Sunna,* even though there existed a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet which specifically recommended the visiting of graves to pray for the dead and to remember them.[51] Here we see Imām Mālik expressing a dislike for something that was actually permissible, i.e. the visiting of graves, because he feared a return to the veneration of the dead which was a common practice in the pre-Islamic age. It is also possible that his remarks reflected the *sunna* of the Medinans who disliked the practice of visiting graves. A later Mālikī scholar, al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388), dealt with *bid'a* at greater length and adduced evidence against the division of *bida'*.[52] Those who held this view, like al-Shāṭibī, appealed to the Koranic verses, *ḥadīth*s, and *athar*s (cited previously) in support of their belief. They refuted, however, the one *ḥadīth* and the one *athar* that

were used by their opponents, who held to a division between good and bad *bida'*. We may consider the way in which these refutations were expressed. Against those who cited with approval the Prophet's words, 'He who introduces some good practice in Islam which is followed after him [by the people], he will be assured of reward like the one who follows it, without their rewards being diminished,' they said,

> You have used this... *ḥadīth* without mentioning the occasion of the *ḥadīth*, in other words why and when the Prophet uttered this *ḥadīth*. Therefore, you have used this *ḥadīth* out of context. It is like a person reading the verse, 'So woe to the worshippers'[53] without reading the next verse, 'who are neglectful of their prayers'.[54] So if we read only the first verse, the result will be a different meaning. This is exactly the case with our *ḥadīth*.[55]

They asserted that to understand the *ḥadīth* correctly it must be considered within the whole context in which it was given. This context is stated as follows:

> Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh reported that some desert Arabs clad in woollen clothes came to Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him). He saw that they were in a sad plight as they had been hard pressed by need. He [the holy Prophet] exhorted the people to give charity, but they showed some reluctance until [signs of] anger could be seen on his face. Then one of the *Anṣār* came with a purse containing silver. Then came another person and other persons followed them in succession until signs of happiness could be seen on his [sacred] face. Thereupon Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: He who introduces some good practice in Islam which is followed after him [by the people], he will be assured of reward like the one who follows it, without their rewards being diminished...[56]

The argument is that anyone who reads the context of this *ḥadīth* will realize that the *ḥadīth* is talking about a person who introduces something which already has grounds in religion and of such a person it asserts that he will obtain a reward. In other words, the person is regarded as introducing not in the sense of originating but of extending the *Sunna* and hence is worthy of reward. For example, in the case of this *ḥadīth*, we know for certain that charity is encouraged in the Koran and the *Sunna.* Therefore, the Companion had not introduced any kind of novelty but instead was demonstrating a form of charity.

A second refutation involves the *athar* in which 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb stated that the prayers performed during the nights of Ramaḍān (*tarāwīḥ*) are *Sunna* in Islamic law. Ibn Taymiyya appealed to the following *ḥadīth* to demonstrate that the *tarāwīḥ* prayers were observed by the Prophet in congregation on certain nights during Ramaḍān and that the Prophet stopped the practice as he feared that it might come to be regarded as an obligation. Therefore, when the Caliph 'Umar gathered the people under one reciter, he did not introduce anything new. The *ḥadīth* is:

> 'Ā'isha reported: The Messenger of Allāh (May peace be upon him) came out during the night and observed prayer in the mosque, and some of the people prayed along with him. When it was morning, the people talked about this and so a large number of people gathered there. The Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) went out on the second night and they [the people] prayed along with him. When it was morning, they began to talk about it. So the mosque thronged with people on the third night. He [the holy Prophet] came out and they prayed along with him. On the fourth night, the mosque

was filled to its utmost capacity, but the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) did not come out. Some persons among them called out, 'Prayer,' but the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) did not come to them until he came out for the morning prayer. When he had completed the morning prayer, he turned his face to the people and recited the *tashahhud* [confession of faith in one God and that Muḥammad is His Prophet]. Then he said: Your affair was not hidden from me in the night, but I was afraid that [my observing prayer continuously] might make the night prayer obligatory for you and you might be unable to perform it.[57]

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya stated that the utterance of the Companion is not proof, especially if it contradicts a Prophetic *ḥadīth*. He also said that 'Umar called it a lexicographical innovation (*bid'a lughawiyya*) which is more comprehensive in scope than the specific sense of a religious innovation. Going further, he stated that lexicographical innovation consists of anything originated, while religious innovation consists of anything created in contrast to proof or evidence from the *Sharī'a*.[58]

At this stage we may draw the general conclusion that the debate on the issue of the division of *bida'* into good and bad and the idea that *bid'a* is only evil, continued throughout the first, middle, and later periods of the discussion of the concept of *bid'a*. In other words, arguments about the division of *bida'* into good and bad, a concept which was formulated by al-Shāfi'ī, and the idea that *bid'a* is evil in the first period (cf. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ), was a major concern of the writers on *bid'a* throughout the middle period (cf. Abū Shāma and al-Ṭurṭūshī) or the later period (cf. Ibn Taymiyya and al-Shāṭibī). The debate concerning the

acceptance of the idea of the division of *bida'* into good and bad and the rejection of the division was a heated one among scholars because every camp succeeded in finding some evidence for its point of view in the *Sharī'a.* This is possibly why the debate continued over a long period of time. Also during the middle period, another attempt to divide *bida'*, this time into five categories according to legal valuations, was promoted by al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām. This division was less acceptable than that into the two categories of good and bad, as it lacked any evidence for its support, as we will see later.

After this brief analysis of the concept of *bid'a* and its various applications, we may proceed to consider the definition of *Sunna,* a term which can be defined from many angles. Firstly, from the point of view of the traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*), *Sunna* has been defined as 'What was referred to the Prophet, his sayings, deeds, tacit approval, or description of his attributes (*ṣifāt*) - whether in physical appearance or in disposition - before the emigration (*hijra*) to Medina or later."[59] For the traditionists, *bid'a* would be anything specifically disapproved of in the Prophetic *ḥadīth* and, since they were considering only specific issues, they were not concerned whether these practices found support in the Koran or not. Secondly, for the purpose of contrasting *bid'a* with *Sunna,* the definition is that which is provided by the experts in the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*al-uṣūlūn*). For them, *bid'a* is the exact opposite of *Sunna.* This definition is the most comprehensive in scope. The *uṣūlūn* define the *Sunna* as 'anything which is based upon evidence or proof in the *Sharī'a,* whether it be the

Koran, Prophetic Tradition, or the Companions' independent interpretation (*ijtihād*).'[60] An example of the Companions' independent interpretation is their collection of the Holy Koran in their own lifetime. It must be remembered, however, that their *ijtihād* was based on evidence from the *Sharī'a,* so that Ibn Ḥazm (384–456/994–1063) could assert that '*Sunna* is the *Sharī'a* itself.'[61] His definition was therefore framed within the context of the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Both Ibn Ḥazm's definition and that of al-Shāṭibī clearly stated that the *Sunna* is the *Sharī'a* and that *bid'a* is the opposite of *Sharī'a* as they define it. This understanding fits squarely with the views of the majority of Mālikites and Ḥanbalites that innovations are always in the religious field and must therefore always be evil. So they stood opposed to the view that *bida'* could be divided into good or bad innovations. This understanding of *bid'a* as always being evil also accords with al-Shāṭibī's idea of *bid'a* as it involves human acts:

> The category of prohibited actions is governed by two considerations. First, simply that it is prohibited by law (*muḥarram*), second, that it literally opposed the rules of *Shari'a.* It is the latter consideration to which the technical sense of *bid'a* pertains.[62]

However, it is true that there are certain rituals which are matters of controversy among scholars in that it is debated whether these acts have ground in the *Sharī'a* or not, such as the prayer in the middle of the month of Sha'bān or the prayer of Rajab.[63] After thus stating the definitions of *bid'a* as given by traditionists and again by theorists of Islamic law, we are able to see clearly the

settled differences between these definitions. These differences between the *muḥaddithūn* and the *uṣūlūn* are due to the fact that the *muḥaddithūn* look to the *Sunna,* i.e. *Ḥadīth,* only with the purpose of reporting anything related to the Prophet Muḥammad, whereas the *uṣūlūn* are concerned with legal aspects and how legal rulings develop.

The third position is that of the *fuqahā'* (jurists). We should first recognize that in the practical science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) action is divided into five categories known as *al-aḥkām al-taklīfiyya.* They are as follows: (1) obligatory (*wājib*) actions, as when a person is obliged to perform an act in order to obtain reward or otherwise be punished; (2) prohibited (*muḥarram*) actions, which are the opposite of obligatory, i.e. reward is granted for avoiding them; (3) recommended (*mandūb*) actions, for which there is no punishment if one does not do them; (4) undesirable (*makrūh*) actions, which are the opposite of recommended, i.e. although one should avoid them, there is no punishment if one does them; and (5) permissible (*mubāḥ*) actions, which are neutral. The jurists (*fuqahā'*), therefore, define the *Sunna* in a strict sense as something pertaining to the classification of legal values. The *Sunna* therefore is a recommended act for which there is no punishment if it is omitted although a person might incur censure.[64]

Another definition existed of *Sunna* and that was: 'everything that has been traced back to the Prophet and belongs not to the two categories of

farḍ (religious duty) and *wājib* (obligatory).[65] *Sunna* was equated with *mandūb* (recommended actions), while *bid'a* became equated with *makrūh* (undesirable actions). The jurists use the term *mandūb* when pronouncing a verdict on such an action, while they use the term *Sunna* in a broad sense like the *uṣūliyyūn* in order to justify their verdict. In other words, they use the Koran, *Ḥadīth,* and Companions' traditions in order to prove their verdicts.

Indeed, these three definitions of the *Sunna* mentioned by the *muḥaddithūn, uṣūliyyūn,* and *fuqahā'* are very important in the discussion of the concept of *bid'a* in the coming chapters, as *bid'a* stands contrary to the *Sunna.* So in the following chapters we will see how the scholars applied these defintions and their understanding of the concept of *bid'a* in their writings.

We have now considered the earliest evidences in the sources for the meaning of *bid'a,* which has been seen to contrast with *Sunna,* adherence to which and the avoiding of innovation is strongly emphasized. However, up to this point, we have found no clear statement of the content of *bid'a* as a concept, with the exception of certain rituals linked with prayer and a general attitude of condemnation expressed toward certain innovatory groups. It is necessary therefore at this stage to turn to the extant works on *bid'a* in our quest for further clarification.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal wa-bi-Hāmishih Muntakhab Kanz al-'Umal fī Sunan al-Aqwāl wa'l-Af'āl li-'l-Muttaqī* (Beirut, Dār Ṣādir & al-Maktab al-Islāmī, n.d.) I, 202.

2. Ahmad von Denffer, *Ulum al-Qur'an: an Introduction to the Sciences of Koran* (Leicester, Islamic Foundation, 1983) 126. For further information on the methods used in interpretation of the Koran, see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān,* I, 93.

3. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History,* tr. F. Rosenthal (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958) II, 444.

4. Koran, 6 (al-An'ām): 101.

5. Koran, 2 (al-Baqara): 117.

6. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān,* II, 540. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd (223-321/838-933), the earliest lexicographer whose work is extant, i.e. *Jamharat al-Lugha* (Baghdad, Maktabat al-Muthannā, n.d.) I, 245, attaches a general religious sense to the term *bid'a* when he explains that the verb from the root *b-d-'* means 'to originate, or to create'. He gave a general explanation of this usage, stating that 'Allāh, the Exalted One, is the Originator and the Creator (*Bādi'*) of the heavens and earth.' Ibn Durayd stated that the Arabs commonly say, 'You are not the first innovator of this matter', i.e. 'You are not the first to create and originate such-and-such.' This, he said, is like the following verse which demonstrates that the Prophet Muḥammad is not the first messenger: (Allāh said to His Prophet,) 'Say: I am not an innovation (بدعاً) among the messengers...'

(Koran, 46 [al-Aḥqāf]: 9). A later lexicographer, called Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Fīrūzābādī (729-817/1329-1415) stated in his book, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, 2nd ed. (Cairo, al-Ḥalabī, 1952) III, 3, that *bid'a* as noun, with stress placed on the first syllable, means anything invented in relgion after it has been completed, or anything invented by passion or desire (*hawā*) after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. It would appear that al-Fīrūzābādī had in mind the Koranic verse in which it is declared, 'This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.' (Koran 5 [al-Mā'ida]: 4). Al-Fīrūzābādī cites only the religious meaning of the term and implies that *bid'a* always has in view some deliberate, reprehensible purpose since he defines it as 'anything invented by passion or desire', without mentioning the fact that *bid'a* might alternatively spring from simple ignorance.

7. Koran, 46 (al-Aḥqāf): 9.

8. In the present study use has been made of an abridgment of Ibn Kathīr's work by the modern scholar Muḥammad al-Ṣābūnī: *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (Beirut, Dār al-Qur'ān, 1973) III, 316.

9. Koran, 57 (al-Ḥadīd): 27.

10. Al-Ṣābūnī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, III, 406.

11. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, VI, 226.

12. Koran, 6 (al-An'ām): 153.

13. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, XII, 229 f. This *ḥadīth*, reported by al-Ṭabarī, is also to be found in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, VI, 89 f.

14 Koran, 5 (al-Mā'ida): 4.

15. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām* (Riyadh, Maktabat al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadītha, n.d.) I, 49.

16. Koran, 6 (al-An'ām): 159.

17. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān,* XII, 268-271.

18. Ahmad Hasan, *The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute, 1970) 43.

19. Muḥammad b. Makram b. Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut, Dār Ṣādir & Dār Bayrūt, 1968) XIII, 225.

20. John Penrice, *Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran* (London, H.S. King, 1873) 73.

21. Koran, 35 (Fāṭir): 43.

22. *Al-Mu'allaqāt al-Sab'a,* with commentary of al-Zawzanī (Cairo, A.H. 1315) 102, cited in Hasan, *Islamic Jurispudence,* 85.

23. Koran, 33 (al-Aḥzāb): 62.

24. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab,* II, 131.

25. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunna,* II, 169, cited in I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 35 (with slight alteration based on a comparison with the Arabic text).

26. Koran, 4 (al-Nisā'): 140. Translation taken from A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford, O.U.P., 1986) 93.

27. Hasan, *Islamic Jurisprudence,* 86 f.

28. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* tr. 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976) II, 410.

29. A variation of this *ḥadīth* reads in addition, 'as every *bid'a* is an error

(*ḍalāla*).' See Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan,* cited in I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 35 (with slight alteration based on a comparison with the Arabic text).

30. Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Māja, *Sunan Ibn Māja,* ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Bāqī (Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1952) I, 18.

31. Koran, 2 (al-Baqara): 175.

32. Koran, 28 (al-Qaṣaṣ): 50.

33. Al-Nawawī, *Forty Hadith,* tr. Ezzit Ibrahim & Denys Johnson-Davies, 2nd ed. (Kuwait, Ṣaḥaba Islamic Press, 1985) 40.

34. Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-'l-Ḥikam* (Cairo, Dār al-Fikr, 1962) 52.

35. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* I, 399 f.

36. *Ibid.,* 450.

37. *Ibid.,* IV, 105.

38. Abū al-Faraj b. al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-Quṣṣāṣ wa-'l-Mudhakkirīn,* tr. & ed. Merlyn L. Swartz (Beirut, Dār al-Mashriq, 1971) 211.

39. *Ibid.*

40. See *ibid.,* 96 f. for more information where he explains that certain of the *salaf* (pious ancestors) disliked story-telling for six reasons, two (being the more relevant to our study) will be noted later.

41. Al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī* (n.pl., Dār Iḥyā al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya, n.d.) I, 53.

42. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bid'a,* 42.

43. *Ibid.,* 12.

44. Al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī,* I, 55 f. See also Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bid'a,* 56 f.

45. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* II, 515 (brackets added). (With slight alteration).

46. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan,* V, 84, no. 4710.

47. See e.g. Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Shāma, *al-Bā'ith 'alā Inkār al-Bida' wa-'l-Ḥawādith,* ed. 'Uthmān Aḥmad 'Anbārī (Cairo, Dār al-Hudā, 1981) 22 f.; and see also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 36 f.

48. Al-Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa-'l-Lughāt* (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1975) III, 32.

49. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* IV, 1405 f. (With slight alteration).

50. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* tr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, 4th ed. (Chicago, Kazi Publications, 1979) III, 126 f. (With slight alteration). See also Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa',* ed. Aḥmad Rātib 'Armūsh, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Dār al-Nafā'is, 1977) 85.

51. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bid'a,* 45. For further information on the veneration of saints in Islam, see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 255–341.

52. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* 37. These two definitions will be examined later in the fifth chapter in the course of discussing al-Shāṭibī's book.

53. Koran, 107 (al-Mā'ūn): 4.

54. Koran, 107 (al-Mā'ūn): 5.

55. Salīm al-Hilālī, *al-Bid'a wa-Atharuhā al-Sayyi' fī al-Umma* (Amman, al-Maktaba al-Islāmiyya, 1983) 26.

56. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* IV, 1405 f. (With slight alteration).

57. *Ibid.,* I, 367.

58. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm wa-Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm* (Riyadh, Maṭba'at Majd, *ca.* 1970) 275 f.

59. Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, *Tawjīh al-Naẓar ilā 'Ulūm al-Āthār* (Cairo, n.publ., 1910) 2; al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth min Funūn Muṣṭallaḥ al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1960) 35-38, cited in Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunna wa-Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī'*, 3rd ed. (Beirut & Damascus, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1982) 47.

60. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt* (Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Tijāriyya) 4-6, cited in al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunna wa-Makānatuhā,* 48.

61. 'Alī b. Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām,* ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Cairo, Maṭba'at al-'Āṣima, 1927-30) I, 43.

62. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* ed. Rashīd Riḍā (Cairo, Muṣṭafā Muḥammad 1915) I, 18, cited in Muhammad Khalil Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy* (Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute, 1977) 300.

63. See al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 117-121.

64. Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Ālī al-Laknawī, *Tuḥfat al-Akhyār fī Iḥyā Sunnat Sayyid al-Abrār,* 9, cited in 'Izzat 'Alī 'Aṭīya, *al-Bid'a wa-Muqīf al-Islām minhā,* 2nd ed. (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1980) 100.

65. Al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* (Cairo, al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937) 31, cited in al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunna wa-Makānatuhā,* 48.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EARLY DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF *BIDʿA*

In this chapter we will examine the discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* during roughly the period between the second/eighth century and the fifth/eleventh century. The examination will follow a historical sequence according to the dates of death of the eponymous founders of the four major schools of jurisprudence, namely Ḥanafite, Mālikite, Shāfiʿite, and Ḥanbalite. Also each school will be dealt with separately in sub-sections, once again in sequence of the dates of death of the various adherents of each school. This is because it is usually the case that scholars of a particular school share the same ideas and concerns. By adopting this method of treatment, it is hoped that we will be able to identify the development of the discussion of *bidʿa* and each scholar's contribution to an understanding of the concept as they comment on the first hint of the subject in the Koran, how the *Sunna* elaborates the Koranic suggestions, and how the Prophetic traditions and the traditions of the Companions provide further clues as to the concept of innovation as these have been reviewed in the preceding chapter.

The selection of the four major schools of jurisprudence noted above is due to the fact that 'since about A.D. 1300 only four schools of law have survived in orthodox Islam."[1] Furthermore, these schools have spread and still exist authoritatively throughout the Muslim lands. The Ḥanafite *madhhab*, which started in Iraq and spread as far as Afghanistan, is recognized as the official school in the Indian subcontinent and is also adopted by the majority of Chinese Muslims.[2] The Ḥanafite school of jurisprudence

> became the favourite school of the Turks, both in Central Asia and particularly in the Ottoman Empire, where it enjoyed the constant favour of the dynasty and exclusive official recognition; apart from Turkey proper, the Turkish Muslims in the Balkan countries, Cyprus, Rhodes, etc. are Ḥanafīs.[3]

The Mālikite school, which emerged from the school of Medina, has spread in the West of the Muslim world. It

> prevailed not only in the Maghrib (Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, including Muslim Spain) but almost in all the rest of Africa, so far as it has adopted Islām. The Mālikite school has many followers in Egypt: in Upper Egypt it occupies about the same position as the Shāfi'ite in Lower Egypt.[4]

One might ask the question why the Mālikite school, which emerged in Medina, spread mainly in Africa and al-Andalus. In order to answer this question it is necessary to note that the city of Qayrawān in Tunis was established in order to

spread Islam amongst the Berbers and to propagate the doctrine of Islam. This took place

> after the consolidation of Muslim rule; in the period of conquest a nominal conversion was considered sufficient. During the reign of the pious Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abdul-Aziz (717-20) the first serious attempt at preaching Islam systematically to the Berbers was made.[5]

So it is possible that the people who came to propagate Islam in this area were followers of the Mālikite school. It should be remembered that in the ninth century A.D. the town of Qayrawān had become a significant centre of religious learning. The learning of Islamic law, 'especially the Malikite rite, flourished in Qairawan, and the major theological controversies of the Muslim East echoed loudly there.'[6] In addition to this, some scholars link the spreading of the Mālikite school with political motives, arguing that since the Umayyad Empire fell into the hands of the 'Abbāsids in Syria, the new Umayyad caliphate in Spain deliberately adopted the Mālikite *madhhab* for the sake of dispute with the 'Abbāsids.[7]

The Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence commenced in Cairo and still prevails in Lower Egypt, in the Hejaz, and in parts of South Arabia. It is further represented in some parts of Eritrea and Somalia, and prevails among Muslims in Tanzania and Kenya. There are also Shāfi'ites in some territories of Central Asia and on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts of India. Lastly, the Shāfi'ite *madhhab* has been adopted by the great majority of Muslims in Indonesia,

Malaysia, and surrounding Muslim areas.

The Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence has spread less than the three preceding schools. However, it was adopted in Iran before the change there to Shī'ite Islam. The Ḥanbalites were many in Syria and Palestine and for a long time Damascus remained an important centre of the Ḥanbalite school. Later the Ḥanbalite *madhhab* became adopted by the Wahhābīs as the official school in their territory, i.e. principally Saudi Arabia. The reason for this adoption was that Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb was inspired by Ibn Taymiyya (667-728/1268-1327) and his pupil Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) who were both Ḥanbalites.[8]

All of these four schools of jurisprudence recognized the four major sources (*uṣūl*) of Islamic law, i.e. the Koran, the *Sunna, ijmā'* (consensus), and *qiyās* (analogy). Al-Shāfi'ī was himself a great scholar in the field of the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Concerning *ijmā'*, he denied that any 'agreement of the scholars of a particular locality had any authority...[and argued] that there could be only one valid consensus - that of the entire Muslim community.'[9] According to al-Shāfi'ī, analogy is 'a particular form of *ijtihād*, the method by which the principles established by the Qur'ān, *sunna*, and the consensus are to be extended and applied to the solution of problems not expressly regulated therein.'[10] Moreover, the deduction of *qiyās* must have its initial point in principle in the three sources, namely the Koran, *Sunna*, and

ijmā'.[11] These four major sources are the fundamental bases for any judgment made of actions by human beings. The jurists and scholars use these sources in order to identify whether an action or belief is an innovation or not.

The characteristic of the period we are dealing with in this section is that most of the scholars - such as al-Ash'arī, al-Malaṭi, and al-Baghdādī - were more concerned with credal innovations. However, some of them - such as Ibn Waḍḍāḥ the Mālikite scholar and al-'Ukbarī the Ḥanbalite scholar - were concerned with both credal and ritual innovations. The reason why most of the scholars concerned themselves with credal innovations was because this period witnessed a massive development of sectarian groups. However, two strong groups - the Khārijites and the Shī'ites - developed more sharply. As B. Lewis observed,

> during the period between the death of the Prophet and the fall of the Umayyad caliphate two main heretical groups developed, expressing in religious terms the opposition of certain parties to the existing social and political order and to the orthodox faith that was its moral and public expression.[12]

Consequently, Sunnite (orthodox) scholars during this period were concerned in the main about two things. The first was their desire to consolidate and elaborate the Sunnite belief using the Koran and Prophetic and Companions' traditions. The second was the need to refute any emergent kind of belief among any group that was contrary to the Sunnite doctrine. This is clearly why the majority of

scholars were more concerned about innovations in religous belief. The Sunnite scholars also contributed to the problem by their prosecution of Ja'd b. Dirham, 'a forerunner of the Mu'tazila, who in 125/742 [*sic*, actually 742], during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Hishām, was condemned, mutilated, and crucified on a charge of *zandaqa*."[13] Such persecution was carried out during the Umayyad caliphate and the early period of the 'Abbāsid caliphate, but it was in fact reversed under the Caliphs al-Ma'mūn (198-218/813-832) and al-Mu'taṣim (218-227/833-842) when instead persecution took place against Sunnite scholars like al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.

Another significant characteristic of this period was the development of the idea that *bida'* could be divided into good and bad, a view that was formulated by al-Shāfi'ī (150-204/767-820). Al-Shāfi'ī referred to Prophetic traditions and traditions of the Companions to prove the legitimacy of this division.[14] Moreover, the idea of the division of *bida'* into good and bad seems to have been a practicable option for those people who were not skilled to understand the arguments of the two opposing sides, whether for the division or against it.

Overall, this period witnessed a remarkable concern about *bid'a* both in belief and ritual, with greater attention being paid by the scholars of this period to credal innovations. Discussion of ritual innovations was pursued only by a few scholars, like Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and al-'Ukbarī. It was yet to become the major

concern that it was in the middle period to be examined later.

Ḥanafite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bidʿa*

While the intention in this section is to examine the attitude of Ḥanafite scholars towards the notion of *bidʿa,* it is unfortunate that we do not have any representative scholar of this period to refer to. The problem will, however, be discussed after a brief notice of the eponymous founder of the Ḥanafite school and how he reacted against *bidʿa.*

Al-Nuʿmān b. Thābit Abū Ḥanīfa al-Taymī (80–150/699–767) was the leading jurist of Iraq and gave his name to the Ḥanafite *madhhab.* He resided in Kufa until the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Manṣūr summoned him to Baghdad and appointed him as *qāḍī,* an appointment which Abū Ḥanīfa refused.[15] Abū Ḥanīfa was a respected jurist particularly in

> the rationalistic method of establishing rules in matters of fiḳh, namely by making a large use of the personal view (*raʾy*). [This method]...is characteristic for the Ḥanafite school, [and] may go back to Abū Ḥanīfa himself, but the attacks on him by later Ḥidjāz scholars, who reproached him for persistent neglect of tradition, are unfounded. The so-called *Musnad Abī Ḥanīfa* is a collection of traditions, compiled by his disciples and later Ḥanafites, which the imām of their madhhab had used and elaborated in his teaching.[16]

It has been suggested that Abū Ḥanīfa actually belonged to the Murji'ite and Jahmiyya groups. It was, for example, reported that when a man asked Abū

Yūsuf (a pupil of Abū Ḥanīfa) if Abū Ḥanifa was a Murji'ite, Abū Yūsuf answered in the affirmative. When he was further asked if he was a Jahmite, again Yūsuf replied in the affirmative. Then the enquirer asked Abū Yūsuf why he was different from his teacher, to which Abū Yūsuf replied that as Abū Ḥanīfa was a teacher, what is good must be accepted and what is evil must be rejected.[17] Abū Ḥanīfa also declared that 'faith (*īmān*) does not decrease or increase,'[18] a belief which is in fact in accordance with Murji'ite doctrine and contrary to the Sunnite belief that faith can indeed decrease or increase. So there is a consensus between the sources that Abū Ḥanīfa was a Murji'ite only in the definition of faith in which he did not include action, albeit action (*'amal*) is implied. Concerning the question whether or not he was a Jahmite, it has been stated that

> The later enemies of Abū Ḥanīfa, in order to discredit him, taxed him not only with extravagant opinions from the principles of Murdji'a, but with all kinds of heretical doctrines that he could not possibly have held. For example, they ascribed to him the doctrine that hell was not eternal - a doctrine of the Djahmīs, against whom Abū Ḥanīfa ranged himself explicitly in the *Fiḳh al-Akbar*.[19]

So it is debated among the scholars whether Abū Ḥanīfa was a Jahmite or not. Even al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reported various opinions. It would seem probable that Abū Ḥanīfa did at some stage hold some beliefs of the Jahmites but later abandoned them, such as the belief in the creation of the Koran. Proof that Abū Ḥanīfa came to abandon this opinion is his saying, 'Whoever says the Koran is

the creation of God is an innovator (*mubtabi'*).[20] Further, when he was asked about Jahm b. Ṣafwān (the eponymous founder of the Jahmites) who declared the creation of the Koran,[21] Abū Ḥanīfa recited the verse: 'It is a grievous thing that issues from their mouth as a saying. What they say is nothing but falsehood!'[22] This is clear evidence that he must have abandoned Jahmite belief.

Before examining Abū Ḥanīfa's position concerning *bid'a* as it is found in his works, we should note that there is some controversy over their authenticity, some arguing that they are wrongly ascribed to him. Thus, for example, the works entitled *al-'Ālim wa-'l-Muta'allim* and *al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ* are both said to have been wrongly ascribed to him and to have originated in the circle of his disciples.[23] The authentic document which is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa is his letter to 'Uthmān al-Battī, 'in which he defends his Murdji'ite views in an urbane way...another title that was ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfa is the *Fiḳh al-Akbar*. Wensinck has shown that the so-called *Fiḳh al-Akbar*[1] alone is relevant.'[24] This very short text consists of ten articles on beliefs, demonstrating the Sunnite attitude against the Khārijites, Qadarites, Shī'ites, and Jahmites. The first article of the faith is a direct proposition against the Khārijites: 'We do not consider any one to be an infidel on account of sin; nor do we deny his faith.'[25] In article three Abū Ḥanīfa demonstrates the position of the orthodox against the belief of the Qadarites. He says, 'What reaches you could not possibly have missed you; and what misses you could not possibly have reached you.'[26] In articles four and five he expresses the othodox position against the Shī'ites, saying,

> We disavow none of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah; nor do we adhere to any of them exclusively [like the Shī'ites in the case of 'Alī]. We leave the question of 'Uthmān and 'Alī to Allah, who knoweth the secret and hidden things.[27]

Lastly, in article ten, he explores the Sunnite position against the Jahmites, stating, 'Whoso sayeth, I do not know the punishment in the tomb, belongeth to the sect of the Djahmites, which goeth to perdition.'[28] However, the rest of his articles are not concerned with these groups of innovators.

At this stage it is worth noting that both *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*[1] and *al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ* share a similar view. As J. Schacht comments,

> All but one of the theses of the *Fiḳh al-Akbar I* occur also in the *Fiḳh al-Absaṭ*, which consists of statements of Abū Ḥanīfa on questions of theology in answer to questions put to him by his disciple Abū Muṭī' al-Balkhī (d. 183/799). The contents of the *Fiḳh al-Akbar I* are therefore authentic opinions of Abū Ḥanīfa, though nothing goes to show that he actually composed the short text. But the so-called *Fiḳh al-Akbar II* and the *Waṣiyyat Abī Ḥanīfa* are not by Abū Ḥanīfa.[29]

Overall Abū Ḥanīfa was concerned in his writing with creed and the Sunnite (orthodox) position against the innovatory groups. It was only concerning the increase or decrease of faith that he concurred with the Murji'ite belief. This was a very minor issue which did not affect his general position as representative

of the Sunnite school.

It has not been possible to discover any writer on *bidʿa* in the Ḥanafī school until al-Turkumānī in the seventh-eighth/thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. The reason for this is unclear, but it might be suggested that, since the Ḥanafite *madhhab* began in Baghdad, the capital of the ʿAbbāsid Empire, Ḥanafite scholars may well have been preoccupied with the discussion of matters relating to trade, e.g. contracts of partnership, which were a particular speciality of Islamic jurisprudence. While it seems likely that Ḥanafite scholars recognized the importance of writing on *bidʿa,* the task was fulfilled by others outside the Ḥanafite school.[30]

Although it has not been possible to discover any discussion of *bidʿa* in works written by Ḥanafite scholars, they did, more positively, present a discussion and elaboration of Sunnite beliefs. So, for example, we find Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Azdī al-Ṭaḥāwī (239-321/853-933) who wrote a book known as *al-ʿAqīda al-Ṭaḥāwiyya.* This treatise is an account of the Sunnite dogma concerning fundamental issues such as the unity of God, His attributes, and His act of creation.[31] It will be useful to refer to the large commentary on this small work by ʿAlī b. Abī al-ʿIzz al-Ḥanafī (731-792/1330-1389) entitled *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyya fī al-ʿAqīda al-Salafiyya.* This commentary will enable us to see the position of the Sunnites with regard to religious belief. For example, al-Ṭaḥāwī states that 'nothing will happen without God's will.'[32] While this

appears to be a simple statement of the orthodox creed, it has further implications, as 'Alī b. Abī al-'Izz notes: 'This is a refutation of the Qadarites and Mu'tazilites who declared that Allāh wants all people to become believers although infidels want to be unbelievers against God's will.'[33]

Concerning the Koran, al-Ṭaḥāwī also stated the orthodox position, saying, the

> Koran is the word of God; it is an utterance from Him without questioning how, revealed to the Prophet. It is the real word of God which is different from the word of human beings. Whoever hears the Koran and declares that it is like a human being's word is an infidel, because Allāh blames and promises to punish anyone who declares that this is a human being's word.[34]

Allāh warns in the Koran that anyone who says, 'This is nothing but the word of a mortal!'[35] will be punished with his severe punishment. Allāh says, 'Soon will I cast him into Hell-fire.'[36] In this context both al-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Ḥanafī (the commentator) place great emphasis on the issue. Al-Ḥanafī says, 'This basis is one of the most fundamental in the religion of Islam. It is on this issue that many sects have diverted from what al-Ṭaḥāwī mentioned, which has the proof from the Koran and *Sunna*.'[37] The emphasis is made because the issue whether the Koran is the word of God or created by Him was a matter of controversy between the orthodox on the one side and the Mu'tazilites on the other.

Another significant issue discussed by al-Ṭaḥāwī was that of monotheism.

Commenting on the Koranic verse which states, 'It is He who created all things, and ordered them in due proportions,'[38] al-Ṭaḥāwī observed,

> We need to confess this belief that God is the Creator and anyone who associates with any other creator will be a polytheist. This also applies to the people who say, 'Every man creates his action.' It is on acount of this that the Qadarites are the Magians of this nation (*umma*).[39]

The commentator on al-Ṭaḥāwī's work mentions several *ḥadīth*s concerning the Qadarites, but he explains that these are weak traditions except for one tradition of the Companions (*athar*) reported by Ibn 'Abbās who said, 'Predestination (*al-qadar*) is the system of monotheism (*tawḥīd*). So whoever believes in God and disbelieves in *qadar*, his belief will be destroyed.' He added further in explanation that if anyone who disbelieves in *qadar*, his belief would be destroyed because belief in *qadar* includes the belief that the knowledge of God is pre-existent and eternal (*qadīm*).[40] Al-Ṭaḥāwī was also concerned to discuss another controversial issue: the definition of faith (*īmān*). While al-Ṭaḥāwī followed the majority Ḥanafite view that faith is only 'an utterance by the tongue and a firm belief in the heart,'[41] his interpreter brought in the definition that was favoured by the majority of scholars, including Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *ahl al-Madīna*, and *ahl al-Ḥadīth*, who said, 'Faith is a firm belief in the heart, an utterance by the tongue, and an action by the organ or limb (*'uḍw*).'[42] This discussion was carried further by al-Ṭaḥāwī in the statement, 'We do not call anyone an infidel who prays towards the *qibla* when he commits a grave sin unless he sees an action as permissible. Also we do not say committing

sin will not affect belief."[43] We may explain the first part of al-Ṭaḥāwī's statement by the example of a person who commits adultery having in his mind that it is a permissible act. This last quotation from al-Ṭaḥāwī exemplifies the Sunnite position against the Khārijites, who described as infidel anyone who commits a grave sin, and against the Murji'ites who believed that committing sin will not affect belief.

Furthermore, al-Ṭaḥāwī demonstrates the Sunnite position as contrary to the Shī'ite view concerning the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad. He said, 'We love all of the Companions of the Prophet. We do not love them excessively. We do not disavow them. We hate anyone who hates them or disgraces them..."[44] He added, 'We approve the caliphate of Abū Bakr after the Prophet because he is the best person of this community (*umma*), then 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, then 'Uthmān, and then 'Alī. They are the enlightened caliphs."[45]

The above extracts bring out some of the most important issues enabling us to demonstrate that al-Ṭaḥāwī was mainly concerned with the consolidation and elaboration of the Sunnite belief vis-à-vis the innovatory groups. However, al-Ṭaḥāwī was not concerned about the name of the particular sect involved or about their heresiology, so that in fact he hardly mentions them by name, with the exception of one occasion when he wished to conclude his work. Then he stated,

> We absolve ourselves to Allah from anyone who opposes what is already

expounded and explained by us. We pray to Allah Almighty to guide us firmly on the path, to let us die on it, to protect us from the opposing and contradicting views, and from disparaging factions such as: Mushabbiha:- those who compare Allah to creatures: Mu'tazila... Jahmiya... Jabriyya:- those who believe that man is bound to do what is destined with no free will of his own: Qadariyya... All of these went against the people of the Sunnah and Jama'at and so misled themselves. We absolve ourselves from them, as they have deviated from the right path to that of destruction.[46]

Mālikite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this section we will explore the attitude towards the concept of *bid'a* of the most famous Mālikite scholars who, in fact, gave it considerable attention.

It is first necessary to provide some brief information about the eponymous founder of this school (*madhhab*) and how he reacted against *bid'a*. The Mālikite school of jurisprudence is named after Mālik b. Anas b. Mālik b. Abī 'Āmir b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥārith al-Aṣbaḥī al-Madanī who was presumably born in 93/711 and died in 179/795. He became distinguished for his learning in the Prophetic tradition of Medina and in Islamic law. Al-Shāfi'ī said, 'If the scholars are mentioned, Imām Mālik is the star' and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said concerning Mālik, 'May God have mercy on him, his soul is in heaven and his knowledge is everywhere.' In addition to this, al-Dhahabī, who died in 748/1347, said,

Mālik possessed many virtues. The first was that he had a long life with superior morals, while the second was that he possessed sharp perception. His third virtue in the consensus of the scholars was that he was an authoritative and sound transmitter, while the fourth was that they [the scholars] set him as a religious scholar, pious, and a follower of the *Sunna.* His last virtue was that he was advanced in the field of jurisprudence and legal opinion (*fatwā*) which was based on his accurate foundation.[47]

Moreover, Mālik was an undisputed master in both the science of *Ḥadīth* (*'ilm al-Ḥadīth*) and the *Sunna*,[48] *Ḥadīth* being a theoretical discipline, and the *Sunna* 'a compendium of practical rules.'[49]

The character of Mālik is evident in the considerable attention that he pays to the *Sunna* which is embodied in his greatest work, *Kitāb al-Muwaṭṭa'* (The Smoothed Path). In the introduction to *Tanwīr al-Ḥawālik,* al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-1505) observed that al-Shāfi'ī had said, 'After the Book of Allāh, there is no book on the face of the earth sounder than the book of Mālik.'[50] Mālik's *Muwaṭṭa'* is a compilation of *Ḥadīth* and law which 'represents the earliest stage of literary development which was common to both *fiḳh* and *ḥadīth.*'[51]

Mālik's position on *bid'a* can be traced through his book *al-Muwaṭṭa'* which, while it is not a discrete work on *bid'a,* nevertheless cites some *athar*s on the subject. Thus, he reported the *athar* concerning the *tarāwīḥ* prayers (night prayers during the month of Ramaḍān) when 'Umar

gathered the people together under one reciter. On that occasion 'Umar is reported to have remarked, 'What an excellent *bid'a!*'[52] The inclusion of this *athar* by Mālik only indicates that he was aware of the possible division of *bid'a* into good and bad that might be deduced from 'Umar's words. However, Mālik did not comment on the *athar* itself. So as far as this book is concerned, his attitude is perhaps ambivalent. The simple reporting of this *athar* in *al-Muwaṭṭa'* does not suggest that Mālik was either against or in agreement with the division because his prime aim was to gather and report the traditions of the Prophet and of the Companions. The position of Mālik with regard to the division of *bid'a* into good and bad may, however, be deduced from other, more explicit sources, for example the statement of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (who was a follower of the Mālikite school of jurisprudence) that 'Mālik disliked any kind of *bid'a,* even if it is a good innovation.'[53] There is one other *athar,* concerning the Qadarites, one of the major innovatory groups, which demonstrates the much harsher view that the Mālikites took of credal innovations than was usual, in which it is reported

> on the authority of Mālik through his uncle who said: I was walking with 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz who asked me what I thought about the Qadarites. I said: My opinion is to ask them to repent, but if they refuse, slay them. 'Umar said this was his verdict and then Mālik said that it was his opinion too.[54]

It is not surprising to find no more information from Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa'* concerning the notion of *bid'a.* This is due to the fact that his

account is merely the first recorded collection of *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s arranged according to an Islamic legal method. As Mālik belonged to the early generation, his view on *bid'a* was perhaps reflected more clearly in the writings of his followers such as Ibn Waḍḍāḥ who came later and reported the opinion of Mālik concerning specific innovations, e.g. the custom of the muezzin's shaking out his robe (*tathwīb*) to indicate to the people that the time of prayer had begun. Mālik apparently saw this as a species of innovation (*bid'a*) and he therefore said to the muezzin, 'Do not innovate in our territory [Medina] something that has not existed before. This action was not practised by the Prophet who lived here for ten years, nor by Abū Bakr, 'Umar, or 'Uthmān.'[55] Another example recorded by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ is the dislike expressed by Mālik and the scholars of Medina for the custom of following in the footsteps (*āthār*) of the Prophet when he preformed his prayer, with the exception of Qubā'.[56] Qubā' (the place three miles from Medina where the Prophet's she-camel knelt as she brought her Master on his flight from Mecca and where the Prophet laid the foundations of the mosque) was excepted because there is a tradition in which visiting Qubā' is recommended. Again, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ reported Mālik's opinion concerning a legal matter when he was asked about frequent recitation of the Koranic *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (no. 112) in one *rak'a*. Mālik expressed his dislike for this practice, saying, 'This is an innovation (*bid'a*) which has been introduced.'[57] So we see that the position of Mālik can be traced through the reports of his followers such as Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and also of al-Ṭurṭūshī who narrated that Mālik said, 'I dislike the telling of pious tales in mosques.'[58] In this matter, Mālik was expressing a general disparagement

of tales whether they were told before or after prayers.

The stance taken by Mālik against various *bid'a* is again evident in his famous statement concerning the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) that 'The sitting of Allāh upon the throne is knowable and we are obliged to beleive in that. However, to ask about how God sits is an innovation (*bid'a*).'[59] Since this belief was based upon the Koranic verse that states, 'He who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between, in six days, and is firmly established (*istawā*) on the Throne (of authority),'[60] it must be taken as a true statement of fact in terms of belief, but to question how is a form of innovation. So Mālik accepted God's attributes as real but without questioning how (*kayfa*) they look, yet he did not accept the concept of anthropomorphism, because he believed God's attributes are of a completely different order to man's.

We proceed now to examine the work of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (200-289/815-901) who was born in Spain within the domain of Mālikite jurisprudence. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's treatise is the earliest surviving work on *bid'a,* although we know of two earlier works written by Mālikite scholars which have not survived.[61] Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's priority gave him credit among later scholars as the producer of an important primary source on *bid'a.* His purpose in writing was to collect as many *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s as he could find relevant to the subject. In fact, compared with later works on *bid'a,* his work appears primitive in methodology and somewhat obscure in content. In general, his personal view

on *bidʿa* is implicit rather than explicit, which is due to the nature of his work as a collection of traditions of the Prophet and his Companions. It is also due to the fact that the knowledge of *Sunna* and the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) had not yet been elaborated but was still in the process of development. He did not bring any comment on his own account, except as may be deduced from the titles he gives to his chapters. His book consists of seven chapters with headings. Only the fourth is divided into four sub–sections.

It is not easy to form a clear opinion of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's personal view on *bidʿa,* but it might perhaps be deduced from the chapter headings, particularly that of Chapter Two: "Every novelty is innovation", which includes some of the major *ḥadīth*s we have dealt with in the previous chapter.[62] These *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s generally condemn the actions of innovators. His motive appears quite transparent in influencing people against *bidʿa,* since he devotes a whole chapter, divided into four sub–sections, to warning people not to accept innovations. For example, we find the tradition reported on the authority of Abū Idrīs al–Khawlānī saying: 'It is better for me to hear about one of the corners of the mosque being burned rather than to hear about a single innovation which has no committed person to change it. When *bidʿa* is introduced, the *Sunna* will be removed.'[63] In this chapter also he devoted a whole section to warning people not to sit with innovators. He wrote,

> It is narrated by Sufyān al–Thawrī who said: Whoever sits with an innovator will not be free from these things: that it might be mischief to another; or it

> might affect the heart of the sitter which might mislead him from the right path into Hell-fire; or lastly, the sitter may be over-confident about himself and continue to sit with the innovator. This last attitude may shake the stability of firm faith.[64]

A similar warning is related by Yaḥyā b. Kathīr who said, 'If you meet an innovator on a pathway, you ought to take another way.'[65]

In another chapter entitled "On destroying the root (*aṣl*) of Islam, burying religion, and the emergence of *bid'a*", Ibn Waḍḍāḥ quoted the Companion Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān. Hudhayfa is said to have taken two stones, placed one over the other, and then asked his companions, 'Can you see the light between the two stones?' They said, 'O Abū 'Abd Allāh, we can only see a little light.' Then he said, 'I swear by the name of Allāh who holds my heart in his hand that innovations will spread until you can only see the right as you see what is between the two stones...'[66]

As mentioned already, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's book consists only of his collection of *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s, yet if we examine the book carefully, it becomes evident that he is dealing with something very important. He deals with both credal and ritual innovations. To illustrate the point, we may cite the following examples of traditions included in the work. Firstly, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ reports that it was narrated by Yaḥyā b. 'Ubayd who said, 'I met a Mu'tazilite who stood up. Then I stood up too and said: You go or I have to go. It is better for me to walk with a

Christian rather than with you."[67] Despite the possible exaggeration of the anecdote, this is an indication that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was concerned for the Islamic community and wished to save them from innovations of faith as these seemed more serious than ritual innovations. In another example concerning an innovative group, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ states that it was reported that a man named Ghaylān came to Mecca and went to Mujāhid (one of the followers of the Companions) and said,

> 'O Mujāhid Abū al-Ḥajjāj, I heard that you order people to avoid me and you mention something I have not uttered. I only say so-and-so,' and he mentioned a few things with which Mujāhid did not disagree. When he left, Mujāhid said: Do not sit with him because he is a Qadarite.[68]

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was also aware of other major groups such as the Murji'ites and Rāfiḍites and he therefore reported some *athar*s demonstrating the necessity of avoiding them.[69] These examples suggest that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was aware of the threat that these major innovatory groups posed for Sunnite Islam.

Providing examples of ritual innovation, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ reported that

> 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd had been told that certain people used pebbles in the course of making supplications inside the mosque of Kufa. Ibn Mas'ūd came himself and discovered that each person had a heap of pebbles. He stoned them until they went out from the mosque...[70]

This event indicates that ritual innovations, which were far less harmful than

credal innovations, had already emerged during the time of the Companion 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd. It also indicates the firm stance taken against innovation by the Companion. With regard to specific ritual innovations, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was aware of certain rituals such as people's gathering during the night of 'Arafa (the ninth day of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja) and the prayer made in the middle of the month of Sha'bān.[71] He was further aware of the pious storytellers (*qaṣṣāṣūn*) who were popular in his time. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ reported many *athar*s concerning the storytellers under the heading "What has come to be *bid'a?*" In this chapter he reported some *athar*s demonstrating the attitude of the 'early generations' of Islam towards the storytellers. For instance, he wrote, 'It has been reported on the authority of al-Ḍaḥḥāk who said: I saw 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz inflict imprisonment on the storytellers and the people who sat with them.'[72] The position of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ himself becomes more clear in his statement that 'the storytellers should not sleep in the mosques or be allowed to sleep.'[73] Neither Ibn Waḍḍāḥ nor Mālik suggested why they disliked the storytellers and viewed them as innovators. However, Ibn al-Jawzī (510–597/1116–1200) gave six reasons why he himself disliked storytelling, a few of which are perhaps relevant to our present discussion. The first reason he gave was that during the early generations 'it was customary for the people to imitate and follow, so that when they saw something that did not exist in the time of the Prophet [such as storytelling], they condemned it outright.'[74] Another possible objection was that the majority of storytellers 'did not search out what was true, nor were they on their guard against error by reason of the meagerness of their knowledge and their lack of

fear for God.[75] It is clear too that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was particularly concerned with ritual innovations which have been linked in one way or another with prayer. Prayer is such a frequent and public practice, the very token of a Muslim's identity, whereas credal innovations are by no means so noticeable, with the exception, that is, of the declaration of faith.

Concerning the division of *bida'* into good and bad, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ declared that *bida'* are always evil.

Overall, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's account is a consideration of both credal and ritual innovations. However, he was clearly more concerned with ritual innovations. This is perhaps due to the fact that other contemporary scholars were eager to assert Sunnite beliefs and to refute the views of innovating groups which were seen as posing major challenges to Sunnite belief. Seeing this task being dealt with by his contemporaries, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ evidently realized the danger of ignoring ritual innovations and his work is therefore a narrative concerned with the attitude of the Companions and their followers towards the notion of *bid'a* and its practices. He apparently believed that the recording of their views on the matter was a necessary corrective for the men of his day.

Shāfi'ite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this section we will explore the attitude towards the concept of

bidʿa of the most famous early Shāfiʿite scholars who paid considerable attention to the problem. At the outset, it will be helpful to provide a brief view of the eponymous founder of the Shāfiʿite *madhhab* and how he personally reacted towards *bidʿa*.

The Shāfiʿite school of jurisprudence was named after Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī who was born in Gaza in Palestine in 150/767 and died in Fusṭāṭ (Old Cairo) in 204/820. Al-Shāfiʿī became one of the disciples of Mālik who 'seems to have been impressed by Shāfiʿī's intelligence, and...allowed him to read *al-Muwaṭṭa'* under his guidance.'[76] Al-Shāfiʿī did not write any discrete work on *bidʿa,* but his position can be found in the works of his followers such as Abū Shāma (599–665/1203–68) and al-Ghazālī (450–505/1058–1111).

Al-Shāfiʿī formulated a distinction between good or praiseworthy innovations (*bidaʿ ḥasana aw maḥmūda*) and bad or objectionable innovations (*bidaʿ sīʾa aw madhmūma*). The latter category consists of innovations contradictory to the Koran, the *Sunna,* or *ijmāʿ*. These he termed bad innovations. However, the second category consists of novel introductions which are not contradictory to the above and these are good innovations.[77] To support this view, al-Shāfiʿī cited the *athar* related by Caliph 'Umar concerning the performing of supererogatory congregational prayers at night during the month of Ramaḍān (i.e. the *tarāwīḥ* prayers): 'Truly this is an excellent *bidʿa* (*niʿmat al-bidʿa hādhih*).' Goldziher suggested that the distinction between good and bad

bida' had in fact been made earlier than al-Shāfi'ī. He commented,

> For this distinction we possess data from the time of the oldest teachers of Islam. Even Mālik b. Anas, with reference to an innovation in the rite of Ṣalāt, transmitted the words attributed to 'Umar *ni'mat al-bid'atu hādhihi*, "truly this is a good *bid'a!*"[78]

One might argue from this Companion's tradition that the division of *bida'* into good and bad had been conceived before al-Shāfi'ī and that al-Shāfi'ī was a student of Mālik, possibly having studied and borrowed from his book *al-Muwaṭṭa'*. However, although the idea is present in Mālik's book, its presence there does not, as we have seen, prove that the concept was accepted by Mālik or his disciples. Al-Shāfi'ī is still the first scholar positively to have formulated the division of *bida'* into good and bad, a distinction which became particularly common among Shāfi'ite scholars whereas the Mālikite scholars after Ibn Waḍḍāḥ were generally divided on the subject.

The position of al-Shāfi'ī with regard to *bid'a* may be deduced from his attitude towards the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) and the theologians (*mutakallimūn*). This is because al-Shāfi'ī and the Sunnite scholars of the *Ḥadīth* regarded the dialectical discourse (*kalām*) presented by the Mu'tazilites as an innovation. Not only so, but they also regarded the very subjects discussed by the Mu'tazilites as innovations. Al-Ghazāli cited al-Shāfi'ī's rebuke of the theologian Ḥafṣ: 'It is better to meet God committing any evil sin, with the exception of polytheism (*shirk*), rather than to meet Him with some knowledge

of theology.' He added, 'If people know what is involved in theology, they should flee from it as they flee from a lion.' He further spoke strongly of the punishment he felt due to the theologians with the words, 'People of theology should be beaten and paraded in disgrace.'[79] Concerning sects, al-Shāfiʿī is reported to have said, 'Among the heretical tendencies [lit. groups of desire (*hawā*)], I have never seen worse than the Rāfiḍites who are the gratest witnesses bearing false testimony.'[80] His position may also be traced through his statement concerning the definition of bad innovations which are contrary to the Koran, Prophetic Tradition, consensus, and the Companions' traditions.[81] His definition suggests that he was strongly opposed to any kind of innovation if it contradicted the four major sources of Islamic law. The distinction between good and bad innovations observed by al-Shāfiʿī does not suggest that he was lenient towards *bidʿa*; it merely arose in the context of his wider view of innovations in general, while those who opposed the distinction were focusing their attention on the narrow field of *religious* innovations, so that, for example, anything relating to mundane affairs (*al-dunyā*) which does not contradict religious authority (i.e. the Koran, *Sunna,* and *ijmāʿ*) was considered by al-Shāfiʿī to be a good innovation, while to others these matters would not enter into a discussion of *bidʿa* at all.

We turn now to the first Shāfiʿite scholar after al-Shāfiʿī: Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī (260-324/873-935). His first book with which we are concerned is *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Radd ʿalā Ahl al-Zaygh wa-'l-Bidʿa.* It remains unclear when exactly al-Ashʿarī wrote this book, but from its contents it

is plain that it must have been written after he had abandoned Mu'tazilism in 300/912. His purpose in writing is clearly stated in his introduction:

> You have asked me to compose for you a compendious book which will contain a summary exposition of the arguments which elucidate what is true and refute what is vain and empty assertion. And I have thought it good to help you by doing that - may God direct you aright...[82]

This short book consists of ten chapters in each of which there is a series of questions and answers. The plausible reason for following this method was to smooth the way for readers, especially when the contents of the arguments were difficult. The chapters of the book show that al-Ash'arī was trying to demonstrate the Sunnite (orthodox) doctrines while at the same time refuting what was wrong. In Chapter One al-Ash'arī sought to prove by Scripture and reason that God is the Creator of all things.[83] An example of his rational argumentation appears in the following analogy:

> Cotton cannot change into spun thread and woven cloth without weaver or crafsman or supervisor... Now if the change of semen to clot, then little lump, then flesh and blood and bone be an even greater marvel, it proves all the more forcibly that there is a maker who made the semen and translated [*sic*] it from state to state.[84]

In this chapter also al-Ash'arī explains that the Creator is unlike creatures and that the maker is only One.[85] In addition, he demonstrates the Sunnite doctrine, contrary to the Mu'tazilites, that God, the Exalted One, has Attributes such as

seeing, hearing, and knowing.[86] In Chapter Two he demonstrates the Sunnite position that 'God has been ever speaking and that the speech of God is uncreated.'[88] Chapter Three is a continuation of the discussion begun in Chapter Two concerning the divine Willing and its embracing all temporally produced things.[89] Chapter Four is concerned with Sunnite doctrine, contrary to that of the Mu'tazilites and Khārijites, that the vision of God in the life to come is possible.[90] Moreover, al-Ash'arī refuted the Qadarites in a whole chapter devoted to a discussion of *qadar*.[91] In this chapter he posed a question on behalf of the Qadarites: 'Why have you called us Qadarites?' This question he answered by saying, 'Because you claim that you determine your acquisitions and effect them as something determined by you and not by your Creator.'[92] Chapter Six is a discussion of the capacity of human beings.[93] This is a delicate discussion between the Sunnites and the Mu'tazilites. Chapter Seven also continues this debate by discussing the imputation of justice and injustice to God.[94] Chapters Eight and Nine contain a refutation of the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites.[95] In the discussion of faith in Chapter Eight, he argues for the Sunnite position against the Khārijites and Mu'tazilites concerning the sinner who belongs to 'the people of *qibla*'. In the eyes of the Sunnites, the sinner is 'a believer by reason of his faith, a sinner by reason of his sin and grave fault.'[96] However, the Mu'tazilites claimed he was 'neither believer nor unbeliever.'[97] So the sinner is on a stage between belief and unbelief (*manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*). The Khārijites, however, 'regarded grave sinners as unbelievers.'[98] The last chapter, Chapter Ten, is a refutation of the Shī'ites and discusses the imamate.[99] In this chapter al-Ash'arī

explains that the proof of Abū Bakr's imamate is that

> we find men divided into three classes:
> 1) those who hold the Imāmate of 'Alī after the Apostle;
> 2) those who hold the Imāmate of al-'Abbās;
> 3) those who hold the Imāmate of Abū Bakr. Now we see that 'Alī and 'Abbās swore allegiance to Abū Bakr and submitted to his command in company with all the Muslims... Moreover, they addressed him with the words: 'O caliph of the Aposlte of God!' And it is impossible for the community to agree on an error.[100]

Overall, this short book concerns the refutation of the innovatory groups, namely the Mu'tazilites, Qadarites, Khārijites, and Shī'ites, with the greatest attention being paid to the Mu'tazilites. This was apparently for two reasons: the Mu'tazilites were still in a strong position during al-Ash'arī's time, and al-Ash'arī knew them very well, especially as he had been one of them before he abandoned them. Also he had been a student of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, a leader among the Mu'tazilites.[101]

The second book of al-Ash'arī with which we are concerned is his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn.* This large work consists of two parts. The first part, which is our main concern, contains a discussion of the sects of Islam, the most important groups of which al-Ash'arī divided into ten [in fact he lists eleven], i.e. the Shī'ites, Khārijites, Murji'ites, Mu'tazilites, Jahmites, Ḍirārites, Ḥusaynites, Bakrites, the *Nusaq* (Sufi orders), *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth wa-Ahl al-Sunna* (the Sunnites), and the Kallābites.[102] His overrriding concern, however,

is with just four sects: the Shī'ites, Khārijites, Murji'ites, and Mu'tazilites. He devotes most of the first part of this work to a discussion of their doctrines and divisions. The Shī'ites he divided into three principal groups: the Ghālites (subdivided into fifteen groups), the Rāfiḍites (subdivided into twenty-four groups), and the Zaydites (subdivided into six groups).[103] In discussing the Khārijites and their divisions, he did not account for the main group of Khārijites. They would appear to be fourteen in number, but some of them are further subdivided, like the 'Ajāridites (into fifteen) and the 'Ibāḍites (into four).[104] This discussion was followed by a similar one of the Murji'ites, divided into twelve subdivisions.[105] Then he went on to discuss the doctrines of the Mu'tazilites, such as the denial of the vision of God in the life to come, God's Attributes, His Speech, etc.[106] Al-Ash'arī did not discuss the divisions of the Mu'tazilites. However, he treated in depth the principles of the Mu'tazilites which to him were more important than their actual divisions. The principles of Mu'tazilite interpretation that he singles out for criticism are: their views on divine Unity (*tawḥīd*), justice (*'adal*), the state between the states of belief and unbelief (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*), the promise of reward and the threat of punishment (*al-wa'd wa-'l-wa'īd*), and the command to do right and to forbid wrongdoing (*al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa-'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*).[107]

Al-Ash'arī discussed only very briefly the remaining ten groups, but paid greater attention to Sunnite doctrines. This was possibly because these ten groups were less popular with the exception of *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth wa-Ahl*

al-Sunna, whose doctrines are, however, only discussed here in brief; a fuller treatment of them is given in al-Ash'arī's other book entitled *al-Ibāna 'an Uṣūl al-Diyāna.* In this present work (*Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*) he presents an apology for the creed of the Sunnites which includes belief in God, His angels, His books, His Messengers, whatever comes from God, and whatever is reported as authoritative as coming from the Prophet Muḥammad. They believe also, he affirms, in the Oneness of God, that Muḥammad is His Servant and Messenger, that heaven and hell are justified, and that the Hour will come when God will resurrect people from their graves. In addition, they believe that God is on His throne, that he has two hands, eyes, and a face, beliefs which are beyond questioning (*bilā kayf*).[108] Al-Ash'arī uses Koranic verses to support Sunnite doctrine, the Koran being viewed as the uncreated word of God.[109] Towards the end, al-Ash'arī asserts that Sunnites are in favour of avoiding any propogator of innovation.[110] He concludes this part of his work by confessing that he is an adherent of Sunnite doctrine in every respect.[111]

The second part of his book concerns the differences of people on delicate matters[112] such as body, substance, mankind, spirit, soul, the senses, and movement.[113] The discussion in this second part is mainly of a philosophical vein, most commonly in the form of a debate between Sunnite and Mu'tazilite positions.

Al-Ash'arī's *Maqālāt* has been summed up in the words of A.J. Wensinck

when he said, 'It contains (a) a heresiology, (b) the orthodox creed, (c) different opinions on philosophical questions."[114] In this book al-Ash'arī's account of the sects 'is given with perfect objectivity, without a word of retort."[115] Unlike his first book or the work entitled *al-Ibāna 'an Uṣūl al-Diyāna,* this book is not intended as any kind of refutation, but, as its title suggests (*Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*), it attempts rather to explain the tenets of each of the sects. However, his short book (*al-Ibāna*) contains 'agreements in favour of the traditional views and the refutation of those of the sectaries."[116] The object of al-Ash'arī is to demonstrate the doctrines of the Sunnites on the one hand while on the other hand refuting the innovators, particularly the Mu'tazilites, Khārijites, Jahmites, Qadarites, Murji'ites, and Shī'ites.

Al-Ash'arī commences with a chapter expounding the beliefs of the deviators and innovators. He sets out by saying,

> There are many deviators from the truth among the Mu'tazilah and the *ahl al-Qadar* whose straying desires have inclined them to the acceptance of the principles (*taqlīd*) of their leaders and their departed forebears; so that they interpret the Qur'ān according to their opinions with an interpretation for which God has neither revealed authority nor shown proof, and which they have not derived from the Apostle of the Lord of the Worlds or from the ancients of the past; and, as a result, they oppose the traditions of the Companions, related on the authority of the Prophet of God, concerning God's visibility to sight, although with regard to it the traditions come from various sources.[117]

Going further, he listed ten doctrines of these innovators which are as follows:

1) They deny the intercession of the Apostle of God for sinners, and reject the traditions concerning it that are related on the authority of the ancients of the past.

2) They gainsay the punishment of the grave and the doctrine that the infidels are punished in their graves, although the Companions and the Successors have agreed upon this matter unanimously.

3) They believe in the creation of the Koran.

4) They assert and are convinced that human beings create evil; thereby approximating the belief of the Magians, who assert that there are two creators, one of them creating good and the other creating evil (for the Qadariyyah think that God creates good and that Satan creates evil).

5) They think that God may wish what is not, and what He does not wish may be; in disagreement with that upon which the Muslims have unanimously agreed...

6) They think that they, and not God, have control over what is hurtful and what is helpful to them...

7) They think that they alone, and not their Lord, have power over their works, and assert that they are independent of God, and attribute to themselves power over that over which they do not attribute power to God, just as the Magians assert that Satan has power over evil that they do not assert God has.

8) They think that he who enters Hell will not come forth from it, in disagreement with the tradition...

9) They deny that God has a face, two hands, and eyes, knowledge, and power.

10) They reject the tradition, related on the authority of the Prophet, that God

descends each night to the lower heaven, and other traditions among those that the trustworthy have handed down on the authority of God's Apostle. Of like fashion are all the innovators - the Jahmiyyah, the Murji'ah, and the Ḥarūriyyah - deviators in their innovations, who dissent from the Book, and the *sunnah*, and that upon which the Prophet and his Companions take their stand and the community have unanimously agreed, as do the Qadariyyah [and] Mu'tazilah.[118]

So his book is mainly a refutation of these doctrines in favour of the Sunnite doctrines.

The following chapter contains an exposition of the beliefs of the 'followers of the truth and the *Sunna*', i.e. the Sunnites. The chapter is more or less a repetition of the beliefs of the Sunnites as expounded in his previous book, but here we find more information, as at the beginning, where he says,

> If anybody says to us, 'You have denied the beliefs of the Mu'tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Jahmiyyah, the Ḥarūriyyah, the Rāfiḍah and the Murji'ah; now let us know the beliefs you hold and the religion you follow' the answer is: The belief we hold and the religion we follow are holding fast to the Book of our Lord, to the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and to the traditions related on the authority of the Companions and the Successors and the *imāms* of the *ḥadīṯ*:- to that we hold firmly, professing what Abū 'Abdallah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal professed, and avoiding him who dissents from his belief, because he is the excellent *imām* and the perfect leader, through whom God declared the truth, removed error, manifested the modes of action, and overcame the innovations of the innovators, the deviation of the deviators, and the skepticism of the skeptics... The substance of our belief is that we confess God, His angels, His books, His Apostles, the revelation of God, and what the trustworthy have handed down on the authority of God's Apostle, rejecting none of them. We confess that God is one God - there is no god but He - unique, eternal,

possessing neither consort nor child; and that Muḥammad is His servant and Apostle, whom He sent with the guidance and the real religion; and that paradise is real and Hell is real; and that there is no doubt regarding the coming Hour; and that God will raise up those who are in the graves; and God is seated on His throne... We also assert that God has hearing and sight, and we do not deny it as the Mu'tazilah, the Jahmiyyah, and the Hārijites deny it... We believe, too, that the Qur'ān is the uncreated Word of God, and that he who believes the Qur'ān is created is an infidel. We hold that God will be seen in the next world by sight... It is our opinion that we ought not to declare a single one of the people of the *qiblah* an infidel for a sin of which he is guilty, such as fornication or theft or drinking of wine, as the Hārijites hold, thinking that such people are infidels; but we believe that he who commits any of these mortal sins, such as fornication or theft or the like, presumptuously declaring it lawful and not acknowledging that it is forbidden, is an infidel... We believe that God, by the intercession of Muḥammad, God's Apostle, will bring forth a people from Hell after they have been burned to ashes, in accordance with what we are told in the traditions related on the authority of God's Apostle... We believe that faith consists of words and deeds, and is subject to increase and decrease... We believe that the excellent *imām*, after the Apostle of God, is Abū Bakr the Veracious, and that God strengthened the Religion by him and gave him success against the backsliders, and the Muslims promoted him to the imāmate just as the Apostle of God made him leader of prayer, and they all named him the caliph of God's Apostle; then after him came 'Umar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb; then 'Uṯmān ibn 'Affān... Then 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib; wherefore these are the *imāms* after the Apostle of God, and their caliphate is a caliphate of Prophecy. We bear witness concerning paradise in favour of the ten whose favour the Apostle of God bore witness to it, and we are attached to all the Companions of the Prophet, and avoid what was disputed among them.[119]

The remainder of this chapter consists of a detailed refutation of the doctrines of the innovators and a demonstration of the Sunnite doctrines with some evidence drawn from the *Sharī'a*. To simplify the argument for his readers, al-Ash'arī

used the method of question and answer which he had also followed in his *Kitāb al-Luma'*.

Overall, *al-Ibāna* is an important account of the Sunnite creed and a refutation of those deemed innovators from the Sunnite standpoint, i.e. principally the Mu'tazilites, Khārijites, Jahmites, Qadarites, Murji'ites, and Shī'ites, with the greatest attention being paid to the Mu'tazilites. This special concern with the Mu'tazilites is characteristic of all the three books by al-Ash'arī mentioned above and this is because 'the Mu'tazila movement was a powerful one, which succeeded for a time in gaining a hold upon the higher circles in matters temporal and spiritual.'[120] There is, of course, a certain amount of overlap between these three works in terms of the information presented in them about the Sunnites and the arguments used in refutation of the innovators.

Turning now to examine the views of a second Shāfi'īte scholar, al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987), we must examine his book entitled *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Ahwā' wa-'l-Bida'* which is devoted entirely to a discussion of the credal innovations which emerged during the first century of Islam. Al-Malaṭī explains his purpose in writing the book in the following words:

> I like conciseness in writing in every matter, but at the present time I find some groups who devote themselves to expressing their dislike of the company of *Ahl al-Sunna* [the Sunnites]... Therefore, I have written as I have been enabled with the help of Allāh, for he is the helper of *Ahl al-Sunna*.[121]

Al-Malaṭī concludes his argument by pointing out that Allāh says, 'For God is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good."[122]

His treatise concerns seventy-three groups, their names, and what they stand for. Al-Malaṭī states that their beliefs, in addition to their deeds, may lead them into Hell-fire, as the Prophet stated,

> My nation will be divided into seventy-three and one of them is saved from hell. But seventy-two are in Hell. One asked him [the Prophet], 'Who is safe?' The Prophet replied, 'He who follows me and my Companions today [i.e. in what I do and what my Companions do].'[123]

Then he sets forth the beliefs and doctrines of the Sunnites, the sole group saved from perdition. He states that the fundamental beliefs of the Sunnites, agreed on by the scholars (*'ulamā'*) and jurisprudents (*fuqahā'*) and borne witness to by the Companions of the Prophet, are that one must be content with the divine decree, submit to the command of Allāh, be patient under the judgment (*hukm*) of Allāh, follow what Allāh prescribes, avoid what He prohibits, worship Him with the intention of seeking His pleasure, believe in destiny (both good and bad as both are from Allāh), avoid dialectical discourse (*kalām*) and quarrels over religion, believe (contrary to the Shī'ites) in the legitimacy of the expedient practice of wiping one's footwear as a substitute for washing of one's feet in ablutions during winter, believe that holy war (*jihād*) is fighting alongside the people who pray towards the prayer niche (*ahl al-qibla*), that the funeral prayer for *ahl al-qibla* is recommended, that faith can decrease or increase in both utterance and action

(contrary to the Murji'ite view), that the Koran is the word of God (contrary to the Mu'tazilite view), avoid disputing with the ruler whether he inflict justice or injustice, abstain from rebellion against the ruler if he be a wrongdoer (contrary to the Khārijite view), abstain from judging the people who are monotheists (*ahl al-tawḥīd*) and believe in heaven and hell, avoid accusing of infidelity any one of the *ahl al-tawḥīd* if he commit sins whether great or minor, and abstain from swearing against the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the best human beings after the Prophet Muḥammad: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and then 'Alī.[124] So then, he argued, any deviation from these fundamental beliefs is a religious credal innovation.

From the above it is evident that al-Malaṭī lists as fundamental beliefs of the Sunnites those items which were matters of controversy with innovatory groups. So he is distinguished, like al-Ash'arī, by his considerable attention paid to a general review of the major innovatory groups and their development, rather than to any one particular group or ritual innovation, and he was more concerned with credal innovations which, in his judgment, were the more important. The treatise of al-Malaṭī is therefore an account of the major non-Sunnite groups and their doctrines with a refutation of some of their beliefs. The innovatory groups he opposes are the Zanādiqa (subdivided into five sects), the Jahmites (subdivided into eight), the Qadarites (subdivded into seven), the Murji'ites (subdivided into twelve), the Rāfiḍites (subdivided into fifteen), and finally the Khārijites (subdivided into twenty-five). The total of the above groups is therefore

seventy-two.[125] In his discussion of the Zanādiqa, al-Malaṭī was not concerned to pronounce whether they were infidels (*kuffār*) or not. This may be due to the fact that this could be taken for granted since their beliefs were so patently in contradiction to fundamental Muslim beliefs, particularly in the case of some groups of Zanādiqa who believed that the universe emerged by itself and was not the creation of God.[126] It is possible that al-Malaṭī included them because they were in his eyes the worst of innovators. Similarly, he includes some groups of the Rāfiḍites who went so far as to ascribe deity to 'Alī, the Companion of the Prophet.[127] Al-Malaṭī's treatise is the first of its kind to treat in such fulness the various innovatory groups, specifying their names and branches, and refuting their heretical doctrines. His refutation is based upon the Koran, Prophetic traditions, and the traditions of the Companions.

In conclusion, it is clear that al-Malaṭī's work is one of the most important sources of information on the sects of Islam, especially since it is among the earliest books to deal clearly with the question of Islamic sectarianism, framed in the context of an apology for Sunnite Islam over against innovatory views.

Al-Malaṭī was followed chronologically by 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī who died in 329/940. The contents of his book, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq,* are more or less the same as al-Malaṭī's, treating as it does the differences between the sects, as the title of the book indicates. His book does,

however, have a more organized appearance, giving clear information about the sects which, in his view only (unlike al-Ash'aī and al-Malaṭī), should be excluded from the community of Islam. Like al-Malaṭī, al-Baghdādī divided his work into a discussion of seventy-three groups in accordance with the *ḥadīth* already cited. In his introduction he states his aims in writing in the following words:

> You have asked me for an explanation of the well-known tradition attributed to the Prophet with regard to the division of the Muslim community into seventy-three sects, of which one has saving grace and is destined for paradise on High, whilst the rest are in the wrong, leading to the Deep Pit and the Ever-flaming fire. You have requested me to draw the distinction between the sect that saves, the step of which does not stumble and from which grace does not depart... Therefore, I felt it incumbent upon me to help you along the line of your request with regard to the orthodox faith and the path that is straight - how to distinguish it from the perverted heresies and the distorted views, so that he who does perish shall know that he is perishing and he that is saved that he is so saved through clear evidence.[128]

His book consists of five chapters containing the following materials:

1) An explanation of the tradition concerning the division of the Muslim nation into seventy-three sects.

2) An explanation without details of sects in general and those sects which do not belong to the community of Islam.

3) The scandals of each sect belonging to the group of innovations and errors.

4) An explanation of the sects which seem to be derived from (*intasabat*) Islam but which in fact do not belong to it.

5) An explanation of the safe sect, its approval, and the beauty of its beliefs.[129]

Al-Baghdādī divided the sects as follows: Rāfiḍites (twenty), Khārijities (twenty), Qadarites (twenty), Murji'ites (ten), the Jahmites, and the Karrāmites, making in all seventy-two sects. The last group is *Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'ah* (i.e. the Sunnites).[130] In contrast to the deviant groups, al-Baghdādī argues that *Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a,* composed of the traditionists (*ahl al-Ḥadīth*) and men of sound judgment (*ahl al-ra'y*) are

> united by the firm belief in the unity of the creator and in his eternity, the eternity of his unending attributes, the possibility of having visions of Him, without falling into the error of anthropomorphism or atheism, and in acknowledging the books of Allah and his Prophets, the authority of the law of Islam, the permitting of that which the Koran permits and the forbidding of that which the Koran forbids, as well as the holding of those traditions of the Prophets of Allah which are trustworthy, the belief in the last day and the resurrection, the questioning of the two angels in the grave, and the belief in the pool (al-Ḥauḍ) and the balance. He who holds the above mentioned doctrines, not mixing with his beliefs any heresies of the Khawārij, and the Rāfiḍiyyah and the Ḳadariyyah and the rest of the unorthodox; such a one belongs to those who are to be saved; may Allah preserve him in his belief. The majority of the Mohammedans[131] are of this character, the greater number of whom are of the followers of Mālik, and Shāfi'ī, and Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Auzā'ī and al-Thaurī and the ahl al-Ẓāhir.[132]

Like al-Malaṭī's book, this work by al-Baghdādī is an essential source on the sects of Islam, but it differs in its more organized presentation. He spelled

out clearly the sects that were outside the pale of Islam, such as the Sabbābites who were followers of 'Abd Allāh b. Sabā' and who venerated the Caliph 'Alī declaring not simply that he was a prophet but also claiming him a deity.[133] Another company al-Baghdādī stated should be excluded from Islam consisted of those who believed in incarnation (*ḥulūl*), a community of ten groups.[134] He wrote that discussion of these groups was based on views current

> among the theologians as to who is to be reckoned within the community and faith of Islam. We have already mentioned previously that some people think that membership within the community of Islam is granted to everyone who confesses the Prophecy of Muḥammad and that everything which was revealed through him is true, regardless of what his views besides that may be... The approval view, according to us, is that membership in the community of Islam is extended to everyone who affirms the creation of the Universe, the unity and pre-existence of its Maker, and that he is just and wise, rejecting at the same time both Tashbīh (anthropomorphism) and Ta'ṭīl (divesting of attributes). He must also acknowledge the Prophecy of all His Prophets and the veracity of the Prophecy and apostolate of Muḥammad to all mankind, and perpetuation of his law; that everything which was revealed to him is true and that the Ḳur'ān is the source of all the precepts of His Law. He must also recognize the duty of the five prayers in the direction of the Ka'ba, of the poor-rate, of the fast of Ramaḍan and of the pilgrimage to the House, which are required of the community as a whole. Whoever professes all this is included within the people of the community of Islam. After this he is to be observed; if he does not adulterate his faith with an abominable innovation (*bid'a shan'ā'*) which leads to heresy (*kufr*), then he is a Sunnite Unitarian. But if he joins to it some abominable innovation he is to be watched.[135]

Going further, al-Baghdādī explained that if a person follows extreme innovatory groups such as the Khaṭṭābites among the Rāfiḍites, or if he professes the

doctrines of *ḥulūliyya* (incarnation) or metempsychosis, or assumes authority to permit anything forbidden in the Koran or *vice versa,* then such a person does not belong to the community of Islam. However, he asserted, if a person's innovation is such as those followed by the Zaydites or Imāmī Shī'ites, the majority of Khārijites, Mu'tazilites, Jahmites, or the encorporealists (*mujāsima*), such a person may be accounted a member of the community of Islam and liable to the right to be buried in a Muslim cemetery and the right to go and pray in Islamic mosques. On the other hand, al-Baghdādī stated, he may be excluded from the community of Islam in certain ways such as the denial of his right to have the funeral prayer pronounced over him on his death; his slaughtered meats may not be eaten, and women among the innovators must not be allowed to marry Sunnites or *vice versa.*[136]

Al-Baghdādī's chief concern, therefore, was to explain the scandals of the innovators in general and to exclude some extreme sects from the community of Islam. His treatise also covers the saving sect, namely *Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a,* and their doctrines. Al-Baghdādī is distinguished from the previous accounts discussed above by his aggressive attack and sharp criticism of the innovatory groups.

In the same century that al-Baghdādī died (the 4th/11th century), we also have Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (384-458/994-1066) who travelled to many countries in order to pursue the knowledge of Tradition and who 'is credited with

having a hundred *shaykhs* (scholars)."[137] This credit enabled him to become a recognized scholar in the sciences of Tradition and theology. His treatise with which we are here concerned is *al-I'tiqād wa-'l-Hidāya ilā Sabīl al-Rashād 'alā Madhhab al-Salaf wa-Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth.* The title and contents of the book make it clear that the book is a demonstration of the belief and doctrines of the *salaf* (the first three generations of Muslims), particularly concerning the science of theology and the doctrines of the unity of God, His attributes, and the Koran as the word of God. This is presented in order to refute the Mu'tazilites, the Jahmites, and those who believe in the creation of the Koran. It asserts divine predestination, the prophethood of Muḥammad, and the necessity of clinging to the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations. The chapter particularly devoted to clinging to the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations is a very short one, which is followed by another concerning the prohibition of social intercourse (*mujālasa*) with innovators. It is only in these two chapters that we have a direct approach to the subject of *bid'a.*

As a traditionist (*muḥaddith*), in these two chapters al-Bayhaqī took the approach to his subject of citing the relevant *ḥadīth*s, discussing their soundness or otherwise, but with minimal commentary concerning the actual beliefs or practices of the innovators. His methodology is similar to that of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, the Mālikite scholar, in terms of reporting many Prophetic traditions and Companions' traditions. However, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's book is specifically devoted to the subject of *bid'a,* while al-Bayhaqī's treatise deals with the subject by

presenting the doctines and beliefs of the Sunnites. So al-Bayhaqī was concerned with credal innovations and the dangers presented by such innovators as the Murji'ites, Khārijites, and Mu'tazilites.

In his chapter on adhering to the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations, al-Bayhaqī presented many *ḥadīth*s on the subject, but he did make an interesting comment when he reported the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet Muḥammad is said to have spoken of the division of the Islamic community into seventy-three sects. Al-Bayhaqī states that some differences are blameworthy while others are not. What is blameworthy is contradicting the Koran, sound *Sunna,* and *ijmā'* (consensus), or what is implied in these sources of authority concerning fundamental matters (*uṣūl*) such as the differences between the Sunnites and innovatory groups in matters of belief. What is not blameworthy is disagreement over subsidiary matters (*furū'*) which are not determined by the Koran or *Sunna,* such as the differences between jurists in their branches of Sunnite jurisprudence. Indeed, a person who disagrees over a subsidiary matter is granted a reward according to his effort to establish an independent judgment.[138]

In his chapter on the prohibition of social intercourse with innovators, which occupies only a few lines, al-Bayhaqī reported some Prophetic traditions concerning just two sects - the Murji'ites and the Qadarites - demonstrating the necessity of avoiding social intercourse with them. We are informed that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb related a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet who said, 'Do not make social

intercourse with *Ahl al-Qadar* and do not open a dialogue with them."[139] In this short chapter al-Bayhaqī made no comments of his own except to explain the name given to the Qadarites. He stated that they were called Qadarites because they affirmed destiny (*qadar*) for themselves over their own actions and set aside the predestination of God Almighty, denying that man's actions were determined by God and asserting that man creates his own actions. For this reason, he asserted, they are called Qadarites and, alluding to the saying of the Prophet, 'The Qadarites are the Magians of this people' (since they admit a dualism in creation), they are like the Magians who believe in light as the source of righteousness and darkness as the source of evil.[140]

In conclusion, it may be said that al-Bayhaqī was concerned only with credal innovations and the grave danger presented by views of such innovators as the Khārijites, Murji'ites, and Mu'tazilites.

Ḥanbalite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this section we will explore the attitude towards the concept of *bid'a* of the most famous Ḥanbalite scholars who paid considerable attention to the subject. As in the previous sections, we must begin with a brief introduction on the eponymous founder of this school of jurisprudence and how he personally reacted to *bid'a*. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal b. Asad b. Idrīs b. 'Abd Allāh al-Shaybānī (164-241/780-855) was born and died in Baghdad. He was an

imām in the science of *Ḥadīth* and also the *imām* of Baghdad.[141] Al-Shāfi'ī said, 'I left Baghdad and there is no one in Baghdad more pious and a better jurisprudent than Ibn Ḥanbal.'[142] In another place he also said,

> Aḥmad is a leader (*imām*) in eight virtues: a leader in the Koran, a leader in *Ḥadīth*, a leader in the science of jurisprudence, a leader in the science of lexicography, a leader in asceticism, a leader in poverty, a leader in piety, and a leader in the *Sunna*.[143]

So Ibn Ḥanbal was a distinguished adherent of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (the traditionists) who sought to derive 'every law from traditional sources. This compels him to be very indulgent to the *ḥadīth*.'[144] Overall, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 'during the course of the Mihna did more than any other individual to strengthen the resistance of his party to the repressive efforts of the caliph and their officers.'[145]

His position with regard to *bid'a* may be deduced from the considerable attention that he gives to the *Sunna* embodied in his great book *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. This work is 'the great encyclopaedia of traditions... compiled by his son 'Abd Allāh from his [father's] lectures and amplified by supplements (*zawā'id*) containing 28,000–29,000 traditions.'[146] His position may also be deduced from the remarkable stand that he took during the *miḥna* (inquisition) against the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the creation of the Koran, deemed by him to be contrary to orthodox Sunnite doctrine. Ibn Ḥanbal refused to accept the dogma of the Mu'tazilites despite pressure and persecution.

The series of events is the Miḥna or inquisition (833-849), during which government officials in certain important centres were required to make public profession of their adherence to the theological doctrine that the Qur'ān was created. The opposing doctrine was that the Qur'ān was the uncreated Speech of God. The government adopted this policy on the advice of a group of theologians of the Mu'tazilite sect who had become closely associated with it.[147]

All this took place under the authority of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs al-Ma'mūn (198-218/813-833) and his brother al-Mu'taṣim (218-227/833-842)[148] and during this time of religious turmoil Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal stood firmly opposed to the doctrine of the creation of the Koran since it had no evidence in revelation which testifies rather that the Koran is God's word. Scholars praised Aḥmad for his stand against the Mu'tazilites. The contemporary traditionist, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, said, 'Allāh has supported His religion by only two men, and they are Abū Bakr on the day of apostasy and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal on the day of *miḥna*.'[149] So it could be said of Aḥmad that

> it is in him that the spirit of ancient Islam resides during the rationalistic crisis. Conscious of the dangers to the right as well as to the left, he taught that Kuran and *sunna* must be taken in their literal sense, without asking questions, *bilā kaif*... There was a second doctrine for which Aḥmad was ready to give up his life, *viz* that of the uncreated Kuran.[150]

His opposition to innovation is also seen in his stand taken against the dialectical science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) which had been introduced and popularized by the Mu'tazilites. In this context Aḥmad said, 'A theologian never succeeds and whoever tries theology will never get a clean heart.'[151] Nevertheless, at a later

stage, we do find some Sunnite scholars, such as al-Ghazālī, engaged in theological debate in order to defend the Sunnite position. Al-Ghazālī did warn people in general not to become involved in *'ilm al-kalām,* but to leave such debate to a few skilled persons who must of necessity engage in the dialectical science of theology.[152]

From the above it is evident that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was a sincere follower of the *Sunna* according to his knowledge and that he adopted a fiercely conservative attitude which was reflected in his followers after him. So it has been said that 'among the various currents within Islamic theology, none was or is animated by a spirit as consistent and vigorous in the condemnation and persecution of *bid'a* as the school that honours the celebrated Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.'[153]

We now proceed to discuss the views of 'Ubayd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-'Ukbarī (304-387/917-997) who was the first Ḥanbalite to discuss the concept of *bid'a.* His book with which we are concerned is his *Kitāb al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna 'alā Uṣūl al-Sunna wa-'l-Diyāna,* the motive behind writing which he explains in his introduction:

> People have praised what is popular by following heretical tendencies (*ahwā'*), misrepresenting the *Sunna,* imitating the leaders who have no knowledge about the Koran or *Sunna* but who only spread doubts and innovations which might confuse the mind. Therefore, I have written this book, gathering what I have heard from the scholars and what I have read in books concerning the Koran

> and the *Sunna* of the Prophet which emphasizes the necessity of following the *Sunna* of the Prophet and the necessity of being a united group avoiding division.[154]

Referring to the Koran, he asserted that Allāh says, 'Hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves.'[155] Al-'Ukbarī was therefore motivated by contemporary problems which posed a threat to the Islamic community and which he sought to resolve through his writing.

In the first chapter of his book, al-'Ukbarī cites a number of traditions of the Prophet and his Companions demonstrating the necessity of upholding the *Sunna,* loving all the Companions of the Prophet, and condemning *bid'a* and division in religion. Some of these *ḥadīth*s concerning adherence to the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations and innovators[156] have already been reviewed in Chapter Two above, but al-'Ukbarī cites additional *ḥadīth*s concerning the necessity of love for all the Companions, as well as additional *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s concerning innovators such as the Khārijites, Murji'ites, Mu'tazilites, Qadarites, Jahmites, and Rāfiḍites.[157] He was, however, most concerned with the last-mentioned group, as may be concluded from two facts. First, he cited some *ḥadīth*s demonstrating the necessity of love for the Companions, and in particular Abū Bakr and 'Umar, which was contrary to the Rāfiḍite position.[158] Second, he cited more *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s concerning the Shī'ites than concerning any other innovatory group.[159] This was evidently because the Shī'ites were perceived to

pose the most significant threat to the Sunnites at that time. The well-known historian Ibn Kathīr reported that in 317/929 the Qarmaṭians had actually entered Mecca and stolen the Black Stone after killing many pilgrims and stealing their money.[160] This incident, particularly the theft of the Black Stone, indicates the grave threat opposed by this sect. Another reason which influenced al-'Ukbarī to lay more emphasis on Shī'ism in his book was the potential political threat posed by the Fāṭimids in Egypt and the Buwayhids in Iran and then in Iraq. The tension between the Sunnites and Shī'ites was therefore extremely high and Ibn Kathīr reported a severe clash that took place between the two parties in 338/949.[161]

In his second chapter, al-'Ukbarī details the fundamental beliefs of the people who hold to the *Sunna* (*Ahl al-Sunna,* i.e. the Sunnites) such as belief in God, the Koran as the word of God, God's attributes, and predistination.[162] This chapter continues the theme of the preceding one in its retailing of the virtues of the Companions, arguing that the best of this compnay are Abū Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān, and then 'Alī, followed by the ten to whom heaven has been granted and the Companions who have special virtues, such as the warriors of the battle of Badr. He adds that it is one's duty to pray for mercy on the Companions and to avoid discussing the differences between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya,[163] and he concludes the chapter by discouraging argument in general as well as social intercourse with innovators.[164]

The third chapter concerns the following of the *Sunna* in certain actions of both worship and general behaviour, such as the raising of one's hands in commencing prayer, breaking fast as soon as possible after sunset, and delaying one's meal in Ramaḍān until the last moment before dawn.[165]

In the fourth and last chapter al-'Ukbarī makes specific mention of certain innovations practised among Muslims, such as mourning, listening to singers (male or female), fortune telling, dying beards and hair with black colouring, growing a long mustache, women following funeral processions, slapping of one's face and crying out aloud when overcome by a catastrophe, rending one's garments on hearing the Koran recited, reciting poems in the mosques, possessing gold or silver containers, men's wearing silk clothing, making pilgrimages to graves, chanting the Koran like a song, embellishing copies of the Koran, and decorating mosques. In commenting on these practices, he supports his views by appeals to *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s.[166] He concludes the chapter by asserting, 'It is from the *Sunna* and an indication of one's sincerity of faith to have no dealings with anyone who opposes the *Sunna* and consensus (*ijmā'*) of this community, such as the Rāfiḍites, Shī'ites, Jahmites, Murji'ites, Khārijites, Mu'tazilites, and Qadarites.'[167] The chapter also contains some details about these groups and the names of their leaders.

Overall, al-'Ukbarī refers to credal, ritual, and custom innovations, but places the greatest emphasis on credal innovations since these posed the most

significant threat on account of the political divisions they caused and the great difficulty of eradicating them.

* * *

Having examined the writings of the most famous scholars in the four major schools of jurisprudence during this period (the 2nd–5th centuries A.H.), it is evident that each of these schools shared a major concern over the innovatory groups. They quite naturally shared similar views since their principles were based on similar sources, i.e. the Koran and the *Sunna,* and each of them felt keenly the immediate threat posed by such groups as the Khārijites and the Shī'ites. The first group posed a serious threat to the Sunnite caliphate and the Islamic community as a whole, by holding a doctrine which, in the words of B. Lewis, seemed to give 'consent to the point of anarchy' so that, as he pointed out, 'the Kharijites have indeed been described as the anarchist wing of the revolutionary opposition.'[168] The second group, i.e. the Shī'ites, also posed a grave threat, politically when they obtained power under the name of the Buwayhids in Iran and Iraq, and the Fāṭimids in Egypt and North Africa. The Mu'tazilites also posed a serious threat to Muslim scholars such as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who suffered personally at their hands. This was because the Mu'tazilites 'had political views, and those of Baghdad were in close touch with the men at the head of affairs between the years 200 and 235.'[160] So this period witnessed a considerable development of sectarian groups which led Sunnite scholars to write down their

beliefs and to attack those of innovatory groups.

This period also witnessed the discussion of ritual innovations on a small scale, especially by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, the Mālikite scholar, and al-'Ukbarī, the Ḥanbalite scholar. Also in this period al-Shāfi'ī formulated the distinction between good and bad *bida'*, but it was a distinction which remained gnerally unpopular, although it was discussed later by Shāfi'ite scholars and by some Mālikites, as we will see in our discussion of the middle period.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Joseph Schacht, "The Schools of Law and Later Development of Jurisprudence", in *Law in the Middle East,* ed. Majid Khadduri and H.J. Liebesny (Washington, D.C., 1955) 68.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. See J. Schacht, art. "Mālik b. Anas", *SEI.*

5. Jamil M. Abu Nasr, *History of Maghrib,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1977) 71.

6. *Ibid.,* 77.

7. See J.T. Monroe, *Islam and Arabs in Spanish Scholarship* (Leiden, 1970) 233, cited in Mas'ud, *Islamic Philosophy,* 49.

8. Schacht, "The Schools of Law", 69 f.

9. N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh, E.U.P., 1964) 59.

10. *Ibid.,* 60.

11. *Ibid.*

12. B. Lewis, "Some Observations on Heresy", *SI,* 46 f.

13. *Ibid.,* 55.

14. For further illustrations proving the legitimacy of the division of *bida'* into good and bad, see above p.75–77.

15. Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqī (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, n.d.) XIII, 323–330. For further details on the life of Abū Ḥanīfa, see e.g. Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām,* 10th ed.

(Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1935) II, 176–198; Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, *Abū Ḥanīfa wa-'l-Qiyām al-Insāniyya fī Madhhabih* (Cairo, Maktabat Nahḍat Miṣr, 1957); Ḥusayn al-Saymarī, *Akhbār Abī Ḥanīfa wa-Aṣḥābuh,* 2nd ed. (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1976); J. Schacht, art. "Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān", *EI*².

16. Th.W. Juynboll & A.J. Wensinck, art. "Abū Ḥanīfa", *SEI.*

17. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād,* XIII, 375.

18. *Ibid.,* 372.

19. J. Schacht, art. "Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān", *EI*². See also A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed,* on *al-Fiqh al-Akbar.*

20. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād,* 377.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Koran, 18 (al-Kahf): 5.

23. J. Schacht, art. "Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān", *EI*².

24. *Ibid.*

25. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed,* 103.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.,* 104.

28. *Ibid.*

29. J. Schacht, art. "Abū Ḥanifa al-Nu'mān", *EI*².

30. For more information on the involvement of Ḥanafite scholars in discussion on trade and partnership, see Abraham L. Udovitch ("Commercial Techniques in Early Medieval Islamic Trade", in *Islam and the Trade of Asia,* ed. D.S. Richards (Oxford, B. Cassirer, 1970) 39–42) who refers to some books on the subject of

trade. It is possible that the Ḥanafite scholars became involved in this matter because of the importance of trade for the wealth of the 'Abbāsid Empire, and the Ḥanafites were successful in this field because of Abū Ḥanīfa's well-known frequent use of personal opinion (*ra'y*) which is important in the discussion of trade. Another, less plausible, reason for the absence of Ḥanafite writings on *bid'a* is the destruction of Baghdad at the hands of the invading Tatars in the seventh/fourteenth century when the invaders are said to have cast books into the rivers. For further information, see Ismā'īl b. 'Umar b. Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-'l-Nihāya,* 2nd ed. (Beirut, Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1977) XIII, 200-4; A.A. Duri, art. "Baghdād", *EI*^{2}.

31. See 'Alī b. Abī al-'Izz al-Ḥanafī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyya fī al-'Aqīda al-Salafiyya,* ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Riyadh, Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad b. Sa'ūd, 1976) 22-85.

32. *Ibid.,* 58.

33. *Ibid.,* 58 f.

34. *Ibid.,* 112.

35. Koran, 74 (al-Mudaththir): 25.

36. Koran, 74 (al-Mudaththir): 26.

37. Al-Ḥanafī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyya,* 112.

38. Koran, 25 (al-Furqān): 2.

39. Al-Ḥanafī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyya,* 224.

40. *Ibid.,* 225.

41. *Ibid.,* 283.

42. *Ibid.*, 284.

43. *Ibid.*, 268.

44. *Ibid.*, 420.

45. *Ibid.*, 425–438.

46. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Ṭaḥāwī, *The Muslim Creed* [*al-'Aqīda al-Ṭaḥāwiyya*], tr. Suhaib Hasan & Khola Hasan (London, al-Koran Soc., 1987) 19 f. See also al-Ḥanafī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyya,* 473.

47. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ,* I, 207–213. For further details of Mālik's life, see Ibn Farḥūn, *al-Dībāj al-Mudhahhab,* I, 83–135; Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām,* II, 207–218.

48. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 25.

49. See *ibid.*, 24.

50. Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (English), xxxiv.

51. J. Schacht, art. "Mālik b. Anas", *SEI.*

52. See Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (Arabic), 55.

53. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bid'a,* 45.

54. Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (Arabic), 649.

55. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Bid'a,* 39 f.

56. *Ibid.*, 43.

57. *Ibid.*, 44.

58. Al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 99.

59. Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ,* I, 209.

60. Koran, 25 (al-Furqān): 59.

61. See above p.13 f.

62. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *al-Biḍ'a,* 23.

63. *Ibid.,* 36.

64. *Ibid.,* 47.

65. *Ibid.,* 48.

66. *Ibid.,* 58.

67. *Ibid.,* 52.

68. *Ibid.,* 50.

69. See *ibid.,* 51, 56.

70. *Ibid.,* 11.

71. *Ibid.,* 46.

72. *Ibid.,* 19.

73. *Ibid.,* 20.

74. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-Quṣṣāṣ,* 96.

75. *Ibid.,* 97.

76. Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Islamic Jurisprudence: Shāfi'ī's Risāla,* tr. Majid Khadduri (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1961) 11. For more details about al-Shāfi'ī's life, see e.g. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Shāfi'ī wa-Manāqibuh,* ed. 'Abd al-Ghanī 'Abd al-Khāliq (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.); Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām,* II, 218-234; W. Heffening, art. "al-Shāfi'ī", *SEI.*

77. Abū Shāma, *al-Bā'ith,* 22 f. See also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 36 f. There is no indication of the division of *bid'a* into good and bad in al-Shāfi'ī's

works themselves, but it may be found in the followers of his school such as Abū Shāma.

78. Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, 214, cited in Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 36.

79. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo, M. Ṣubayḥ wa-Awlāduh, 1956) I, 84.

80. Al-Rāzī, *al-Shāfi'ī wa-Manāqibuh,* 187.

81. Abū Shāma, *al-Bā'ith,* 22 f.

82. R.J. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash'arī: the Arabic Texts of al-Ash'arī's Kitāb al-Luma' and Risālat Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, etc.* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1953) 5.

83. *Ibid.,* 6 f.

84. *Ibid.,* 7.

85. See *ibid.,* 9.

86. See *ibid.,* 13–19.

87. See *ibid.,* 20–32.

88. *Ibid.,* 20.

89. See *ibid.,* 33–44.

90. See *ibid.,* 45–52.

91. See *ibid.,* 53–75.

92. *Ibid.,* 74.

93. See *ibid.,* 76–96.

94. See *ibid.,* 97–103.

95. See *ibid.,* 104–111.

96. *Ibid.*, 104.

97. *Ibid.*, 105.

98. *Ibid.*

99. See *ibid.*, 112–6.

100. *Ibid.*, 112 f.

101. See al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya,* III, 347.

102. Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn,* I, 65. The editor notes that the actual number of sects listed is eleven

103. See *ibid.*, 65–155.

104. See *ibid.*, 156–196.

105. See *ibid.*, 197–215.

106. See *ibid.*, 216–311.

107. *Ibid.*, 311.

108. *Ibid.*, 312–320.

109. *Ibid.*, 321.

110. *Ibid.*, 325.

111. *Ibid.*

112. *Ibid.*, II, 4.

113. See *ibid.*, 4–42.

114. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed,* 87.

115. *Ibid.*, 88.

116. *Ibid.*

117. Al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibāna 'an Uṣūl al-Diyāna,* tr. W.C. Klein, American Oriental

Series, 19 (New York, Kraus Reprint Corp., 1967) 46 f.

118. *Ibid.*, 47–49 (brackets added and some sections paraphrased).

119. *Ibid.*, 49–53.

120. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed,* 83.

121. Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd,* 14.

122. *Ibid.;* Koran, 16 (al-Naḥl): 128.

123. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* II, 332. See also Muḥammad b. 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī,* ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Cairo, Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī, 1937–65) V, nos. 2640 f. For further discussion of this *ḥadīth,* see al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq,* 4–7.

124. Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa-'l-Radd,* 15.

125. *Ibid.*, 91.

126. *Ibid.*, 91 f.

127. *Ibid.*, 18.

128. Al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects (al-Farḳ bain al-Firaḳ),* tr. Kate Chambers Seelye (New York, AMS Press, 1920) pt. i, 19.

129. Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq,* 3.

130. *Ibid.*, 19.

131. This word employed in this translation is, of course, offensive to Muslims, because it suggests that the Prophet Muḥammad was the originator of the religion of Islam and not Allāh.

132. Al-Baghdādī, *Muslim Schisms,* 38 f.

133. See al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq,* 220–3.

134. *Ibid.*, 241. For a full discussion of these groups outside the community of Islam, see Chapter Four of his book, consisting of seventeen parts (p. 220–299), or the English text in *Moslem Schisms and Sects (al-Farḳ bain al-Firaḳ)*, tr. Abraham S. Halkin (Tel-Aviv, Palestine Publg. Co., 1935) pt. ii, 37–157.

135. Al-Baghdādī, *loc. cit.;* (English text) ii, 37–39.

136. Al-Baghdādī, *al-Firaq,* 221 f.

137. J. Robson, art. "al-Baihaḳī", *EI²*.

138. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *al-I'tiqād wa-'l-Hidāya ilā Sabīl al-Rashād 'alā Madhhab al-Salaf,* ed. al-Sayyid Jumaylī (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1988) 187 f.

139. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan,* V, 84, no. 4710.

140. Al-Bayhaqī, *al-I'tiqād,* 191 f.

141. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān,* I, 36.

142. *Ibid.,* 63 f.

143. Muḥammad b. Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila,* ed. Muḥammad al-Faqī (Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1952) I, 5.

144. I. Goldziher, art. "Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal", *SEI.*

145. Walter M. Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna* (Leide, E.J. Brill, 1897) 2. For further details on his life, see e.g. this work; & Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila,* I, 4–20.

146. I. Goldziher, art. "Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal", *SEI.*

147. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual* (Edinburgh, E.U.P., 1963) 101.

148. See further A.J. Wensinck, art. "Miḥna", *SEI;* Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal.*

149. Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila,* I, 13.

150. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed,* 86.

151. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā',* I, 84.

152. *Ibid.,* 86 f.

153. Goldziher, *Theology and Law,* 237.

154. Al-'Ukbarī, *al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna,* 102-4.

155. Koran, 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 103, cited in *ibid.,* 104.

156. See al-'Ukbarī, *al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna,* 106-171.

157. *Ibid.,* 146, 148, 150, 152.

158. *Ibid.,* 116-9.

159. *Ibid.,* 163-170.

160. See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-'l-Nihāya,* II, 160.

161. *Ibid.,* 221.

162. See al-'Ukbarī, *al-Sharḥ wa-'l-Ibāna,* 176-250.

163. *Ibid.,* 257-274.

164. *Ibid.,* 275-280.

165. *Ibid.,* 285-327.

166. *Ibid.,* 330-343.

167. *Ibid.,* 344-6.

168. B. Lewis, "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresey", *SI,* 47.

169. Watt, *Free Will,* 62.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF *BIDʿA* DURING THE MIDDLE PERIOD

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of *bidʿa* as it was discussed between the fifth/eleventh and the seventh/thirteenth centuries. The characteristic of this period is the concern of most scholars with ritual and custom innovations. This is perhaps because the scholars of the early period had already dealt fairly adequately with the discussion of innovators, deviators, and related issues in the realm of faith. Another possible reason was that by this time the innovatory groups were in a less powerful position to be able to pose any threat to the Sunnite community. Furthermore, ritual innovations had now appeared in a wider range of practices and had spread among the mass of people. This was due to the continued expansion of the Muslim realm and also to Muslims' continuing contact with other cultures and religions. One should also recognize that spiritually the Muslim world was in a state of decline on account of political and consequent social disintegration. Political decline came in the form of the dissolution of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, affecting the Islamic institutions which had been undergirded by state support. Spiritual decline meant that Muslims were now far more lenient in their attitude towards certain innovations, especially

among the uneducated masses of professing Muslims.

Another significant point is the fact that this period witnessed the beginning of a process of transformation as power was transferred from Shīʿite to Sunnite hands in Egypt and neighbouring areas. The period, particularly from 512/1118 to 684/1285, has been well described by M. Hodgson as: 'the victory of the new Sunnī internationalism.'[1] This credal victory meant greater attention being paid to ritual. Sunnite dominance was achieved in the main by the victories of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 589/1193) who made 'the Sunni victory over the Shīʿa complete, at least in Egypt and Great Syria.'[2] Before and during the process of transformation, Muslims suffered a number of disasters, such as the Crusades and the division of the Muslim peoples into a number of different states. However, under the leadership of Nūr al-Dīn (d. 570/1174) and his successor Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 589/1193), the process of transformation began. Nūr al-Dīn

> used his resources for building all sorts of welfare edifices, mosques, hospitals, caravanserais, madrasahs, - as well as for recapturing places held by the Crusaders. Though tolerant within the wide scope then allowed by the Jamāʿī position, he was severe against such heresy as went beyond those limits as he was against tolerating Christian rule in what had been Dār al-Islām.[3]

For our immediate purposes, another important characteristic of this period was that it witnessed the development of the division of *bidaʿ* into good and bad, a view presented by the Shāfiʿite scholars and also by some Mālikite

scholars who had been influenced by the Shāfi'ītes. So, for example, the Shāfi'ite al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām (577-660/1181-1262), who also influenced his pupil the Mālikite scholar al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285), went to the extreme of dividing *bida'* into the five categories of legal valuation, i.e. obligatory, prohibited, recommended, undesirable, and permissible innovations. This is in fact a strange development as the division into five categories has no support at all in the *Sharī'a.* However, it is possible that al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām and his student al-Qarāfī considered the legal judgment of *bid'a* and came to the conclusion that these five categories of legal valuation were the easiest way to understand *bida'*. By contrast, the division of *bida'* into good and bad does have some small support in the *Sharī'a,* which helped along the acceptance of this division among many scholars in preference to the division into five categories. Whether the division into good or bad, or into the five legal categories was considered of any great significance among scholars, especially the early ones, seems doubtful, as their differences concerning this matter were only disputes over words (*khilāf lafẓī*). However, the division into good and bad suggests a lenient position towards *bid'a.* Yet the opponents of the division into good and bad *bida'* might also argue that this approach was an open invitation to introduce things that were contrary to the *Sharī'a.*

We turn now to look specifically at the views expressed during this period by the scholars. In this chapter we will commence with the Mālikite scholars, as we do not have any representative from the Ḥanafite school of

jurisprudence. The reason for this is by no means clear, but it may be suggested that the Ḥanafite scholars in general were less concerned with the discussion of the concept of *bid'a*, as we have already seen. The successors of the early Ḥanafites were following their lead.

Mālikite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

During this period we find a few representatives of the Mālikite school of jurisprudence involved in the discussion of *bid'a*. The first is Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Abī al-'Alā' Idrīs al-Ṣanhājī al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) His book with which we are here concerned is *Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwā' al-Furūq* which is known by its shorter name *al-Furūq*. It is in fact a huge work, consisting of four large volumes, and contains a discussion of differences between the rules (*qawā'id*), one of which is the rule (*qā'ida*) of *bid'a*. So he discusses the differences between the rules which forbid innovations and those which do not forbid them. His discussion is mainly concerned with the division of *bida'* into five categories. He commences by saying, 'Know that the people known as *aṣḥāb* [i.e. the followers of the Mālikite *madhhab*] have agreed upon denying innovations... The truth is in the details. They are of five kinds.'[4] The first kind consists of the obligatory innovation,

which is dealt with in terms of the rules and evidence of obligation in the *Sharī'a*, such as the writing down of the Koran and the *Sharī'a* for fear of their becoming lost, repeating them to those who come after us, which is unanimously [considered] obligatory and the neglect of it is unanimously

forbidden. Such an obligation must not become a subject of differing opinions.[5]

The second kind is the

forbidden innovation, which is dealt with under the rules and evidence of what is forbidden in the *Sharī'a,* such as taxes and cases of injustice which deny the rules of the *Sharī'a,* preferring the ignorant to the knowledgeable, the assuming by inheritance of legal offices by those who are inadequately qualified, claiming that the office was occupied by his father although at the same time he himself is not capable of holding the office.[6]

The third kind is the

recommended innovation, which is dealt with under the rules and evidence of what is recommended in the *Sharī'a,* such as the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, the setting up of portaits (*ṣuwar*) of *imāms,* judges, and leaders contary to the practice of the Companions. [This is to be deplored] because human welfare and legal matters cannot be easily provided for except by respecting these leaders in the minds and hearts of people. In the time of the Companions, people reserved most of their respect for religion and those who were early in the emigration (*hijra*). Then standards changed, that time went and another time came in which respect was achieved through portraits. Therefore portraits were to be glorified in order to obtain human welfare.[7]

The fourth kind is the

undesirable innovation, which is dealt with under the evidence and the rules concerning what is undesirable in the *Sharī'a,* such as prescribing a certain kind of worship to be made on certain days... Included in this section is the practice of going beyond what is stipulated, as when people make adoration of God (*tasbīḥ*) [i.e. by exclaiming '*Subḥān Allāh!*' ('God be praised!')] after the

> five set prayers. They [the exclamations] are thirty-three and may be increased to a hundred. Exceeding this limit means that one is guilty of arrogance and lack of respect before the Law-Maker.[8]

The fifth kind is the

> permissible innovation, which is dealt with under the evidence and rules of allowance in the *Sharī'a*, such as the using of sieves... Because to have good-quality bread is permissible and therefore the means to [produce] it are also permissible.[9]

He adds, 'Judgment concerning an innovation is to be made according to the rules and evidence of the *Sharī'a*. If evidence on a rule can be found, it can be judged accordingly: obligatory, forbidden, or whatever.'[10]

Towards the end of his discussion, al-Qarāfī admitted that if we look at *bid'a* in general terms regardless of the consequences, it would appear undesirable. His general opinion is that one's whole duty is to follow and what is wholly evil is to innovate.[11] So, in theoretical terms, al-Qarāfī condemned *bid'a*, but in a practical way he was in favour of the division of *bida'* into the five categories. This division of *bida'* into the five categories of legal valuation was not initiated by al-Qarāfī, but was in fact borrowed by him from his teacher al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām, as we will see in the section below on Shāfi'ite scholars.

Before leaving al-Qarāfī, however, it will be useful to consider the

rectification (*tahdhīb*) of al-Qarāfī's *al-Furūq* made by Muḥammad 'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Makkī al-Mālikī on the margin of the work. His critique is entitled *Tahdhīb al-Furūq wa-'l-Qawā'id al-Saniyya* and although not properly belonging to this period, it relates directly to the views expressed by al-Qarāfī and so is better dealt with in this context. Al-Makkī takes issue with al-Qarāfī, fastening on al-Qarāfī's own words, 'Know that the people known as *aṣḥāb* [i.e. the followers of the Mālikite *madhhab*] have agreed upon denying innovations.'[12] Al-Makkī demonstrates that this is evidence that all people reject the idea of dividing *bida'* and especially into five categories. *Bida'* then must always be evil, he asserted, and there is no place for obligatory, prohibited, and permissible *bida'*, as al-Qarāfī and his teacher al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām sought to argue.[13] Going further, al-Makkī says,

> All the examples of obligatory, recommended, and permissible *bid'a* mentioned by al-Qarāfī and his teacher Ibn 'Abd al-Salām are included in the fundamental basis of religion or in human welfare, and what belong to these two categories are not innovations. This is because the characteristic of innovation is to exceed what the *Sharī'a* ordains.[14]

Innovation is, he says, 'to invent a mode, way, or element in religion which has no grounds to it at all, and without any previous example, parallel to the original religion. The purpose of this adoption is exaggeration in the worship of God.'[15] This corresponds exactly with one of the definitions of al-Shaṭibī, as we will see in the next chapter.[16] It would indeed appear that al-Mākki was influenced in his ideas by al-Shāṭibī in his opposition to the concept of dividing

bidaʿ into five categories.

Al-Makkī also discussed the judgment of *bidʿa* and explained that *bidʿa* is evil although people differ in their judgment of it. One group adjudges *bidʿa* to be a major sin and this for two reasons. Firstly, because *bidʿa* is a contradiction of legislation given by the Law-Maker. This is because the person who innovates puts himself in a position equal to God. Secondly, it is because *bidʿa,* even if it is a small innovation, represents a supplementary legislation to the original or some decrease in that legislation. For these reasons *bidʿa* must be adjudged a major sin.[17] A second group judges *bidʿa* according to its kind, so that instances of *bidʿa* might be either small or great sins.[18] In this context he also explained that some innovations of innovatory groups, such as the Khārijites, Qadarites, and Murji'ites, are debatable matters among scholars as to whether they are blasphemous or not.[19] As already noted, al-Makkī was influenced by al-Shāṭibī's ideas, so that he explained a small sin would remain as it is under four conditions, as al-Shāṭibī also explained in his book, *al-Iʿtiṣām.*[20] These conditions are as follows: (1) it should not be practised frequently; (2) it should not be promoted among the people; (3) it should not be practised in communal places; and (4) it should not be underestimated in terms of its sinfulness.[21]

He concludes his rectification by saying that 'all of the early Mālikites selected by al-Shāṭibī for inclusion in his book, *al-Iʿtiṣām,* asserted that *bidʿa* is only evil.'[22] This conclusion was based on three forms of evidence. Firstly, it is

an established fact that *bid'a* is what has not been practised by the early generation and it has no proof in the fundamentally authoritative *Sharī'a*. Secondly, all the evidence condemning *bid'a* is general.[23] This implies that there is no place for the division of *bid'a* into different grades of acceptability. (However, those who were in favour of divisions of *bida'* asserted that the condemnation was not general.) Thirdly, *bid'a* concerns only matters which relate to worship (*'ibādāt*).[24]

Al-Makkī was not concerned about the discussion of ritual innovations nor about credal innovations, since his major concern was the refutation of the division of *bida'* into five categories. This is probably because he was not writing a new book but was only concerned with the rectification of *al-Furūq* by al-Qarāfī who explained the division of *bida'*.

Another Mālikite scholar active in the same territory (al-Andalus) as Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was al-Ṭurṭūshī (451-520/1059-1126). His book with which we are concerned is his *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bida'*, which he wrote after his travels in the East in the course of which he met and learned from many scholars, so that the contents of his book reflect his experiences both in the East as well as in the West.[25] His book is one of the important Mālikite accounts of *bid'a*. Abū Shāma (599-665/1202-66) wrote,

> Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṭurṭūshī (may Allāh grant him mercy) wrote a book in which he mentions some innovations which have no grounds in the Koran,

> the *Sunna*, or *ijmā'* (consensus). It is a good, concentrated work, despite being short.[26]

The purpose of al-Ṭurṭūshī's work was to bring to people's awareness the novelties and innovations that had crept into Islam. He divided them into two categories: well-known and unfamiliar innovations. The first category, comprising innovations known to the *élite* as well as to the common people, consists of innovations which are prohibited (*muḥarram*) or unrecommendable (*makrūh*), i.e. the categories of evil *bida'*. *Bida'* in this category do not occupy a great deal of al-Ṭurṭūshī's time because the practisers of them already know that they are forbidden or unrecommendable. There is therefore no need to discuss them. The second category, however, is more pertinent, as it comprises those innovations (*bida'*) which were not recognized as such by the mass of people.[27]

His book consists in the main of a discussion of the ritual innovations that were practised in his time, in his own land, in neighbouring areas, and in other Muslim lands. He notes that it is in fact impossible to limit the innovations which were being introduced throughout the Muslim nation.[28] Our present survey concentrates, however, on four chapters. The first one concerns the Koranic verses which explain the punishment from Allāh for people who seek to interfere with God's commands.[29] Drawing an example from the Koran in the form of a story, he says that this story should be a sufficient warning for the Muslim *umma*.[30] The story is as follows:

> Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold! they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. For on the day of their Sabbath, their fish did come to them, openly holding up their heads, but on the day they had no Sabbath, they came not: Thus did we make a trial of them, for they were given to transgression.[31]

The significance of this verse is that Allāh punished the transgressors because they were untrue to His commandment. Therefore, al-Ṭurṭūshī, concluded, anyone in the Muslim community who is untrue to Allāh's *Sharī'a* by introducing serious innovations, such as innovations in belief, may expect the same fate as the people mentioned in this verse. This seems to be prefixed to al-Ṭurṭūshī's first chapter as the preamble setting the tone for the rest of the work.

In Chapter Two al-Ṭurṭūshī relates four *ḥadīth*s intended to warn the Muslim community against innovations. One of them warns that by not doing so they follow in the ways of the Jews and Christians by becoming divided up into sects disagreeing over matters of faith. In this *ḥadīth,* it is related by the Companion Abū Sa'īd al-Khuḍarī that the Prophet said,

> 'You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit [i.e. inch by inch], so much so that even if they entered the hole of a mastigure [lizard], you would follow them.' We said, 'O Allāh's Apostle, [do you mean] the Jews and Christians?' He answered, 'Whom else?'[32]

Possibly al-Ṭurṭūshī records this *ḥadīth* for certain reasons which were clear in his own mind, but they are not stated in his treatise. However, it seems likely

that he intended to demonstrate by it the danger of imitating Jewish and Christian behaviour, especially their own sectarianism. This fragmentation of the community is again referred to in another *ḥadīth* commented on by al-Ṭurṭūshī. In this *ḥadīth* Abū Hurayra, one of the most famous *ḥadīth*-transmitters among the Companions, reported that the Prophet said, 'The Jewish people are divided into seventy-one or seventy-two and the Christian people are also divided into seventy-one or seventy-two groups, but my people will be divided into seventy-three.'[33] Referring to this *ḥadīth,* al-Ṭurṭūshī commented that scholars see the bases of innovations as four, namely: the Khārijites, the first sect to emerge, in opposition to the Caliph 'Alī; the Rāfiḍites, the Qadarites, and the Murji'ites. He added that the Mālikite scholars cannot find any trace of Islamic sects reaching the number of seventy-three mentioned in the *ḥadīth,* possibly intending to refute certain other scholars, such as the Shāfi'ite scholar al-Malaṭī, who believed in the account of seventy-three sects in Islam.

In Chapter Three al-Ṭurṭūshī reported some of the *athar*s demonstrating the approach adopted by the Companions in rejecting innovations. The chapter goes on to discuss certain ritual innovations such as the *tarāwīḥ* (night) prayers (during Ramaḍān). He discussed the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in their original form, mentioning some *ḥadīth*s which demonstrate that the Prophet performed *tarāwīḥ* prayers in congregation. He further discussed from a jurisprudential point of view certain specific matters relating to *tarāwīḥ* prayers: whether it is better to perform these prayers in private at home or in congregation in the

mosque, the actual form of the prayers, the break between the prayers, and the supplication involving recital of the entire Koran.[35] It is difficult to understand why al-Ṭurṭūshī discussed these legal matters in his book on *bidʿa*, but one may deduce that they were significant and controversial during his time when the mass of people were in confusion whether these acts belonged to the *Sunna* or not. It was possibly for these reasons that al-Ṭurṭūshī discussed the *tarāwīḥ* prayers and related matters in great detail.

Chapter Four, the last one, which occupies more than half of al-Ṭurṭūshī's book, is concerned with unfamiliar innovations and their rejection by the scholars.[36] Here he examines from a legal point of view certain acts being practised and includes other scholars' opinions. He mentions many innovations which, in fact, may be divided into two categories: those not related to prayer and those which are. The first group of innovations, those outside the direct ambit of prayer, include such practices as innovations relating to the recitation of the Koran; decoration of the Koran; storytelling in the mosques; innovations relating to consolation, funeral ceremonies, or memorial gatherings; and the innovations of women who follow funeral processions.[37] The second group of inovations, those connected in some way with the practice of prayer, include such practices as the decoration of mosques and following in the tracks of the Companions by praying in places that they had used for prayer.[38] It is clear then that al-Ṭurṭūshī defined ritual innovations very broadly. These ritual practices had spread among the mass of people. In general then we may say that

al-Ṭurṭūshī was principally concerned with ritual innovations not affecting beliefs, which he discussed from a canonical point of view, depending mainly on the opinion of Imām Mālik.

Shāfi'ite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In the fifth/eleventh century we have the appearance of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (469-548/1076-1153), the author of *al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal* written in three parts. The first part of the work discusses the seventy-three sects of Islam, while the second and third parts discuss other religions and philosophies outside Islam, such as Judaism, Christianity, Mazdaism, Greek philosophy, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and 'many discussions are recounted between Moslem and other teachers and leaders.'[39] If we compare the first part of *al-Milal* with al-Baghdādī's book, we notice immediately that the latter work contains more information on the Sunnite creed and the extreme groups among the innovators which he excluded from the community of Islam. Al-Shahrastānī meanwhile is more scholarly in his approach, his material more carefully arranged, and his attitude fairer since he makes every effort to remain neutral and to avoid value judgments.[40] This difference in approach has been summarized by saying,

> al-Shahrastani merely gives the account of various sects, and only once in a while expresses his own opinion. Baghdadi, on the contrary, cannot refrain from challenging and criticizing these heretical views, so that at times his history of the sects becomes a polemical discussion.[41]

At the commencement of his work, al-Shahrastānī provides five introductions. The one which is most relevant to our discussion is the second introduction concerning the bases for enumerating the sects of Islam. These bases take the form of four principles: (1) God's attributes and monotheism; (2) destiny (*qadar*) and justice; (3) concerning belief, repentance, punishment, and the charge of unbelief (*takfīr*); and (4) the primacy of hearing (*sam'*) (i.e. obedience to the revelation) over reason (*'aql*).[42] According to these principles, al-Shahrastānī divided the major sects of Islam into four, i.e. the Qadarites, the Ṣifātites, the Khārijites, and the Shī'ites.[43] In discussing them al-Shahrastānī imposed upon himself the discipline of objectivity, saying that he will

> mention only the doctines of each sect as he finds them in their books, he will do so without fanaticism (*ta'aṣṣub*) or criticism, and he will not attempt to distinguish truth from falsehood, although the signs of truth are clear in the minds of people who have sharpness of perception.[44]

Al-Shahrastānī adopted this objective approach, because he possibly felt this was the best way to persuade people to follow the right path when they could see all views presented fairly. Possibly also he wrote his book, especially the first part of it, in view of the fact that the majority of scholars of his day were preoccupied with ritual innovations. Guidance was therefore needed concerning basic matters of creed.

After his introductions, al-Shahrastānī mentioned briefly the position of the Sunnites with regard to the four principles mentioned above.[45] Then he proceeded immediately to discuss the twelve groups of Mu'tazilites, the three groups of Jabrites, the three groups of Ṣifātites, and the principal eight groups of Khārijites. One of the Khārijites groups, known as al-Tha'āliba, was subdivided into seven groups and the Ibāḍites, another group of Khārijites, were divided into three groups. He further discussed the six groups of Murji'ites, and finally the principal five groups of Shī'ites. Each of these Shī'ite groups was further subdivided into distinct groups, except for the last one, the Ismā'īlites. The first group among the Shī'ites was the Kaysānites (subdivided into four), the second was the Zaydites (subdivided into three), the third was the Imāmites (subdivided into seven), and the fourth was the Ghālites (subdivided into eleven).[46]

Overall, al-Shahrastānī's treatise, particularly the first part of it, is an important source for discussion of the sects of Islam, particularly as he sought to present their doctrines in an objective manner. The information given by al-Shahrastānī in this middle period is similar to that presented in the early period by al-Ash'arī, al-Malaṭī, and al-Baghdādī. Together, the books of these scholars can be accounted the most important sources for information on the sects of Islam.[47]

We turn now to another Shāfi'ite scholar, al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām (577-660/1181-1262). His book *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* is

considered to be a standard text on the science of the fundamentals of jurisprudence (*'ilm uṣūl al-fiqh*). However, in the second volume, he devotes a very small section to *bid'a*. This short section was expanded upon by the Mālikite scholar al-Qarāfī who has been mentioned earlier in this chapter in the section dealing with Mālikite attitudes. In this small section within *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām* al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām defines *bid'a* as an action or performance (*fi'l* - of either ritual or custom) which had not been observed during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. He took the view that *bida'* may be divided into the categories of obligatory (*wājiba*), prohibited (*muḥarrama*), recommended (*mandūba*), undesirable (*makrūha*), or permissible (*mubāḥa*), but he did not explain how one could decide to which of these legal categories an act or performance belonged, although he did attempt some clarification by means of examples. He stated that the way to obtain a legal valuation (*ḥukm*) of *bid'a* was to examine it according to the rules of the *Sharī'a*. If it is included under the obligatory rules in the *Sharī'a*, it becomes an obligatory innovation, e.g. the learning of the science of grammar because it is essential in order to understand the Koran and the *Sunna* which are obligatory. But it becomes a prohibited innovation if it is included under the rules of prohibition in the *Sharī'a* as it was finally developed, e.g. the beliefs of the Qadarite or Murji'ite sects. A *bid'a* can also be recommended if it is included under the rules of recommendation in the *Sharī'a*, e.g. building schools, arcades (*qanāṭīr*), and *tarāwīḥ* prayers during the month of Ramaḍān. Also *bid'a* may be undesirable if it belongs to those things ruled undesirable by the *Sharī'a*, e.g. the decoration of the mosques and the

embellishment of the paper on which the Koran is written. Finally, *bidʿa* can be permisisble if it is included under the rules of the permissible in the *Sharīʿa,* e.g. shaking hands with people after the *fajr* (dawn) or *ʿasr* (afternoon) prayers, the wearing of fine clothes, and eating varieties of delicious foods.[48]

Al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām was the first scholar to make this practical division of *bidaʿ* according to five legal categories. However, it seems possible that the idea came as an extension of al-Shāfiʿī's division of *bidʿa* into good and bad. This division into five categories of *bidaʿ* was opposed by the majority of Mālikite and Ḥanbalite scholars, the strongest opposition coming from the Mālikite al-Shāṭibī who said that if there is any evidence in the *Sharīʿa* to prove whether a *bidʿa* is obligatory, recommended, or permissible, it will not be considered as an innovation. It is only *bidʿa,* he said, if it has no evidence in the *Sharīʿa* and then it becomes a prohibited or undesirable innovation.[49] In his short chapter on *bidʿa,* Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām only concerned himself with the possibility of dividing *bidaʿ* according to legal valuations and his idea of dividing them into five categories seemed unrefined in the view of al-Shāṭibī, as noted above. Al-Shāṭibī felt that the confusion among Shāfiʿites in dividing *bidaʿ* into either good or bad practices, or according to five legal categories was the confusion of scholars who accounted certain acts of the Companions as innovations when in fact they belonged simply within the category of general human interest (*maṣāliḥ al-mursala*), acts the intention of which is concordant with the purpose of the *Sharīʿa,* such as the collection of the Koran, as we will see in the next chapter

when discussing the views of al-Shāṭibī.[50] We see then that Ibn 'Abd al-Salām offered no support for his division of *bidaʿ* into five categories according to legal valuations, a view which remains weak in view of the fact that it finds no support in the Koran, the *Sunna,* or the Companions' traditions. Therefore, it was difficult for him to persuade people that this division was acceptable.

A contemporary of Ibn 'Abd al-Salām was Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāma (599-665/1202-66) who was the first Shāfiʿite to write a complete book on the subject of *bidʿa.* It was entitled *al-Bāʿith ʿalā Inkār al-Bidaʿ* and is similar to the account given in al-Ṭurṭūshī's *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bidaʿ* mentioned earlier in the Mālikite section. Abū Shāma expressed his admiration of al-Ṭurṭūshī's book, saying, 'It is a good, concentrated work, despite being short,'[51] and we find that Abū Shāma's own approach follows closely in the way taken by al-Ṭurṭūshī before him. However, he did differ over the question of dividing *bidaʿ* into good and bad, as we will see shortly. Abū Shāma's general indebtedness to al-Ṭurṭūshī's work on *bidʿa* is recognizable in his quotations taken from al-Ṭurṭūshī. Moreover, he was also aware of the opinions of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ. Nevertheless, despite his dependence on Mālikite sources, namely al-Ṭurṭūshī, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, and Mālik, Abū Shāma still firmly held to the Shāfiʿite idea of dividing *bidaʿ* into good and bad and he cited al-Shāfiʿī many times. He was in fact the first Shāfiʿite scholar to develop al-Shāfiʿī's idea that innovations might be either good or evil. Abū Shāma devoted a whole chapter to this subject, entitled "The Division of Innovation into Good and Evil" and in it he quoted al-Shāfiʿī's dictum

that

> *bida'* can be divided into two categories. The first one consists of innovations that contradict the Koran, the *Sunna, ijmā'* (consensus), and *athars* (Companions' traditions). This is what we call bad innovations. However, the second is to introduce something new which does not contradict the above-mentioned [authorities]. This is a good innovation.[52]

Going further, Abū Shāma stated that good innovations, such as building schools, are recommended. The best innovation, he said, was the celebration of the Prophet's birthday in the city of Irbil. It was an expression of love for the Prophet Muḥammad as well as an opportunity to give in charity. The originator of the event was a person called 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Malā, a pious man of Mosul, who was followed by the governor of Irbil.[53] The celebration of the birthday of the Prophet was introduced in Cairo by the Fāṭimids in 361/972. In fact, they originated the celebration of six birthdays: those of the Prophet, the Caliph 'Alī, Fāṭima (the wife of 'Alī), al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and the reigning Fāṭimid caliph.[54] The celebration of the birthday of the Prophet was highly promoted in Irbil by the governor Muẓaffar al-Dīn (549-630/1154-1232). He was a modest, yet devoted man, which enabled him to attract people from Baghdad, Mosul, and the Arabian Peninsula - especially preachers, Sufis, reciters, jurists, and poets - to attend the day of celebration.[55] These learned people also encouraged the masses to attend. According to the Shāfi'ite scholars such as Abū Shāma and later al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-1505), practices such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday were permissible. Nevertheless, its acceptability was a

matter of dispute and, as H. Fuchs has pointed out,

> The most interesting document of this feud is a *fatwā* by al-Suyūṭī (*Ḥusn al-maḳṣid*) which gives a brief survey of the history of the festival, then discusses the pros and cons very fully and concludes that the festival deserves approval as a *bid'a ḥasana* provided that all abuses are avoided.[56]

However, in the eyes of some Mālikite scholars such as Ibn al-Ḥājj and Ḥanbalite scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, it remained an evil innovation.

Like al-Ṭurṭūshī before him, Abū Shāma divided evil *bida'* into the two categories of practices which were commonly recogized as *bida'* and those which were not so recognized. Concerning the first category consisting of *bida'* that were well known as prohibited or undesirable practices by the *élite* and also by the common people, he said that there was no need for discussion of these matters.[57] These included, for example, the imitation by some Sufis of their masters (*mashāyikh*) who did not observe prayers nor fast, without having any excuse for these omissions. Concerning the second category, however, i.e. practices whose status as *bida'* was not familiar to the generality of people, Abū Shāma said, 'It is only for this category that I have written the present work.'[58] He was aware of the unrecognized evil innovations that were being practised among Muslims, and so he devoted a short chapter to their discussion. In it he mentions three of these popular innovations. The first was the old innovation of non-pilgrims gathering on the night of 'Arafa (the ninth day of Dhū

al-Ḥijja) to engage in special supplications.[59] Ibn Waḍḍāḥ had reported that some people gathered in the Mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad on the day of 'Arafa after the *'aṣr* (afternoon) prayer to engage in supplications. Then a follower of the Companions, called Nāfi', said, 'I saw the exemplary men sitting at home on that night and I disliked the scholars' staying in the mosque on that night.'[60] The second example recorded by Abū Shāma was the practice in the middle of the month of Sha'bān of reciting the *alfiyya* ('thousand') prayer, so called because it consisted of reciting the Koranic *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* a thousand times, i.e. ten times with each *rak'a,* in addition to reciting the opening chapter of the Koran: *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa.* Abū Shāma asserted that this practice in prayer has no support in the Koran, the *Sunna,* or the Companions' traditions.[61] The third example he cited was the special prayer, known as *raghā'ib* ('wishes') made on the first Friday of Rajab between the *maghrib* (sunset) and *'ishā* (evening) prayers. Of this Abū Shāma commented that it had no grounds in the *Sharī'a,* according to the evidence given by the former Shāfi'ite scholar al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām who stated that neither scholars among the Companions, nor the followers of the Companions, nor again their successors practised this order of worship, nor was it mentioned in their books despite the concern of these people for adherence to the *Sunna.* This, said Abū Shāma, was the clearest evidence that there was no support for the practice of this prayer. However, he allowed, still quoting Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, it is permissible to pray between *maghrib* and *'ishā,* yet without imagining that any special virtue or status attaches to such a practice.[62] The discussion of this form of worship occupied a reasonable section of his book as he

dealt with the issue very thoroughly. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and al-Ṭurṭūshī had dealt with the three examples mentioned above, but not in such detail as did Abū Shāma. It was possibly because these innovations had become widespread among the masses that Abū Shāma took the trouble to demonstrate as conclusively as possible that they had no foundation in the *Sunna.* The remainder of his book is a discussion of ritual innovations introduced in funeral prayers, performance of the *ḥajj,* and during the Friday prayer.[63]

In summary of the preceding examination, we may note the following points. Firstly, there was a similarity between the ideas of al-Ṭurṭūshī and Abū Shāma concerning the division of *bidaʿ* into familiar and unfamiliar practices and the main concern of each of them was with those practices which were less familiar as *bidaʿ* to the generality of people. They also shared the same attitude toward ritual innovations and this is no doubt because al-Ṭurṭūshī had a major influence on Abū Shāma. Secondly, Abū Shāma can be considered the first scholar to have elaborated al-Shāfiʿī's idea of dividing *bidaʿ* into good and bad, contrary to Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām who ignored this division and went further by dividing *bidaʿ* into the five categories of legal valuation. Lastly, it may be noted that Abū Shāma took a lenient position toward the celebration of the Prophet's birthday despite major opposition from the majority of Mālikite and Ḥanbalite scholars. Abū Shāma considered the celebration of the Prophet's birthday to be one of the best innovations practised during his time. The possible factors that influenced Abū Shāma coming to this opinion were the occasions for charity and

kindness that the celebration afforded and the manifest feelings of love for the Prophet Muḥammad that were apparent on that day.[64]

Ḥanbalite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this middle period we have two representatives from the Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence. The first of these is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī b. al-Jawzī (510-597/1116-1200) whose book *Talbīs Iblīs* is our present concern. In this work Ibn al-Jawzī describes the tricks and delusions of Satan evident in religion and dogma and among scholars, rulers, ascetics, Sufis, and the general public. In his introduction he explained how Satan misled people in the pre-Islamic era from following the previous messengers and how he led them to introduce repulsive innovations such as worshipping idols and burning alive female infants. Even after the Prophet Muḥammad came to turn people onto the right path and after the generation of the Companions passed away, Satan reappeared to play an active role in dividing people into sects and misleading them.[65] Ibn al-Jawzī asserted, 'It is necessary to warn people against the plots and stratagems of Satan, for when people know the devil and his evil, they will avoid them.'[66] Ibn al-Jawzī must therefore be counted among the scholars who discussed *bid'a,* since the source of these innovations was one of his major concerns. Indeed, he saw Satan and his delusions as the most dangerous influence upon human beings. To emphasize the point, we may cite the Koranic verse in which Allāh says, 'Verily Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his

adherents that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire.'[67]

Ibn al-Jawzī saw the believer's defence in following the *Sunna* and remaining within the (orthodox) group (*jamā'a*), because Satan is always with the individual.[68] He supported this view by citing many *ḥadīth*s such as one reported by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who stood up to deliver a sermon and said, 'The Prophet stood up in this place and said: Whoever would like to be granted the central place in heaven, let him hold fast with the group (*jamā'a*).'[69] This *ḥadīth* testifies to the importance of remaining within the group, i.e. the Sunnite group, and the necessity of avoiding any deviations from the main group, a policy firmly advocated by Ibn al-Jawzī in this context. He knew too of the *ḥadīth* that foretold the dividing of the Muslim people into seventy-three sects.[70] While the division was, he said, known, he added that we do not know the particular branches of each sect. However, he offered the opinion that the major sects were the groups of Khārijites, Qadarites, Jahmites, Murji'ites, Rāfiḍites, and Jabrites.[71]

Ibn al-Jawzī also devoted a short chapter to the condemnation of innovations and innovators, citing a number of *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s to the purpose.[72] He sought within this chapter to define and explain innovation. Thus he defined *bid'a* as

> an action [whether ritual or custom] which has not been introduced before. However, the majority of innovations are opposed to the *Sharī'a* and attach some extra thing to the *Sharī'a* or else take away from it. Yet if one introduces something which is not contradictory to the *Sharī'a*, the majority of

> the *salaf* [the first three generations of Islam] still dislike it.[73]

From the above explanation one might deduce that Ibn al-Jawzī was opposed to the idea of dividing *bida'* into good or bad. This is also supported by his refutation of the use by al-Shāfi'ī and his followers of the *athar* reported by 'Umar concerning the congregation for the *tarāwīḥ* prayer during the month of Ramaḍān. Thus, Ibn al-Jawzī says, 'The act of praying in congregation is permissible in the *Sharī'a*,'[74] so that in his view *tarāwīḥ* prayers were simply a permissible act and had nothing to do with the concept of good or bad innovations.

Ibn al-Jawzī was in fact far less concerned with the division of *bida'* into good and bad than with a matter which was to him far more serious. His overriding concern was in fact with 'those whom he considered responsible for having introduced into the dogma or the law of Islam innovations which were to be condemned (*bid'a*): *fuḳahā'*, traditionists, statesmen, and, above all, *ṣūfiyya*.'[75] While he was concerned in general with these groups, his particular concern was with the Sufis who occupy more than half of his work. He vigorously attacked the Sufis in such matters as their beliefs, dress, food, drink, listening to songs, their companying with youths and beardless boys, and their neglect of marriage, work, and learning.[76] He also engaged in *ad hominem* attacks upon the persons of leading Sufi figures such as al-Ḥallāj (d. 310/922) who was executed for holding the belief in union with God.[77] D.S.

Margoliouth observed that

> by far the greater part of the book is criticism or censure of Sufis, who owing to the establishment of Orders by Ibn al-Rifā'i (ob. 578): and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani (ob. 561) in the sixth century of Islam, were beginning to acquire that importance which was presently to render them, especially in North Africa, a political factor.[78]

A number of reasons suggest themselves as to why Ibn al-Jawzī was so concerned to make these particular attacks on the Sufis. Firstly, he probably recognized that Sufism seems to cast a bridge between the element of piety which has strong grounds in the Koran and the concept of asceticism, and some surviving un-Islamic ideas such as the veneration of saints. Sufism was originally

> quite 'orthodox'; it started as the consistent application of religious norms contained in the Koran and the early *Sunna*. As it developed it took its own course, assimilating influences from outside, and even came close to becoming a kind of 'alternative' Islam besides the official Islam... The Sufis considered themselves to represent a profounder Islam than the *'ulamā'*, because they payed attention to its inner aspects and to religious experience; in practice Sufism gave rise to a kind of popular Islam which stresses miracles and the veneration of saints.[79]

This happened because 'with the conversion of the inhabitants of Iraq there came into Islam many persons who had been in touch with the Christian mystical tradition; and it is mainly among non-Arabs that mysticism in the strict sense develops.'[80] Secondly, after 250/864, the Sufis occupied a strong position in

Baghdad,

which became the centre of the Muslim mystic movement after 250/864: the date when the first meeting-places for religious discussions and sacred concerts (*ḥalḳa*) were opened, with the first public lectures on mysticism in the mosques.[81]

Lastly, Ibn al-Jawzī was mainly concerned with the tricks of Satan among all groups and more so among the Sufis because they presented a popular form of religion.

In conclusion, it may be said that Ibn al-Jawzī was less concerned to discuss ritual innovations, while his main concern was with the behaviour of the people (which included some suctom innovations), particularly of the jurists, statesmen, philosophers, Khārijites, and Shī'ites, while he paid the closest attention to the Sufis for the possible reasons outlined above.

Our second representative of the Ḥanbalite school during this period is Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (569-643/1173-1245) whose small book with which we are concerned is his *Ittibā' al-Sunan wa-Ijtināb al-Bida'*, which is a simple collection of selected verses from the Koran, *ḥadīth*s, *athar*s, and famous sayings, without any personal contribution from the compiler except for a few lines towards the end of the first chapter and the actual titles which he gives to his chapters. In the first chapter he reported a few *ḥadīth*s and *athar*s supporting the policy enunciated in his title of following the *Sunna* and avoiding

innovations.[82] Also in this chapter he quoted al-Shāfi'ī concerning the specific ritual innovation known as *taghbīr*, i.e. 'rejoicing' (*tahlīl*), which consisted of a kind of chanting or exclamatory adoration conducted by a precentor whom the congregation echoed. It was apparently reported that al-Shāfi'ī said, 'I have come from Iraq where I have seen something which is called *taghbīr*. It is a product of heretical people (*zanādiqa*) intended to prevent people from reading the Koran.'[83] Moreover, when someone asked Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal about *tahgbīr*, he said, 'It is an innovation.'[84] Towards the end of the chapter, al-Maqdisī wrote,

> We seek refuge in Allāh against all innovations... Innovations have spread during our time and are practised by many people. The way to Allāh is to banish these innovations: such practices as attending song recitals, musical concerts, dancing, the company of women, and the company of beardless men. Some people actually think these kinds of innovations are better than performing prayers and reading the Koran. We seek refuge in Allāh against this desertion (*khidhlān*).[85]

This single comment of al-Maqdisī suggests that he was concerned, like Ibn al-Jawzī, with the behaviour of the people. It would appear that he felt the best antidote to these practices was the straightforward presentation of selected verses from the Koran, the *Sunna*, and famous sayings without any explanation or comment from himself.

The remainder of his book deals with specific matters of concern which might be categorized as custom innovations. These were: the mischief (*fitna*) which can be caused through women, prohibition of entering places where women

are present, the isolation of women, the recommendation to lower one's gaze, the recommendation to avoid looking at beardless youths, the avoidance of songs, musical instruments, and dancing.[86] He supported his ideas by citing verses from the Koran and a number of *ḥadīth*s from the *Sunna*. These innovations mentioned by al-Maqdisī do not belong in the categories of credal or ritual innovations, but some scholars like himself accounted certain acts of disobedience (*ma'ṣiya*) as cases of innovation. Al-Maqdisī was only concerned with the matters mentioned above because they had become popular during his own time. In general, his book is a simple compilation, without any deep discussion of ritual innovations or the behaviour of the people.

* * *

Having examined the contributions made to the discussion of *bid'a* by the most famous scholars of three school of jurisprudence during this middle period, it is clear that the Shāfi'ite scholars were in favour of the division of *bida'* either into categories of good or bad, or into the five categories of legal valuation. In fact, the majority of Shāfi'ites favoured the division into good and bad, while only one Shāfi'ite favoured the division according to the five legal categories. This last idea was adopted by the Mālikite scholar al-Qarāfī who appears to have been influenced by his teacher, the Shāfi'ite scholar al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām. The rest of the Mālikites and Ḥanbalites remained opposed to the idea of the division of *bida'* whether into good or bad, or into the five categories

of legal valuation.

This period also witnessed the unique discussion by Ibn al-Jawzī of the delusions of Satan, which in his opinion presented the most dangerous source of innovations. Furthermore, both Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Maqdisī were concerned with certain acts which might be accounted custom innovations, such as dancing, singing, and keeping company with beardless youths. The period also witnessed the discussion on a large scale of ritual innovations in the writings of al-Ṭurṭūshī, the Mālikite scholar, and Abū Shāma, the Shāfi'ite scholar. Both of them shared similar ideas concerning ritual innovations, which is due to the fact that Abū Shāma was directly influenced by al-Ṭurṭūshī. However, they came to opposite opinions as to whether *bida'* could be divided into good or bad practices. Abū Shāma was in fact the Shāfi'ite scholar who developed further the idea of the division into good and bad which had been formulated by al-Shāfi'ī himself. The discusion of ritual innovations in this period is larger than in the early period, but it is less than in the later period, as we will see in the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago & London, Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1974) II, 255.

2. J.D.J. Waardenburg, "Official and Popular Religion as a Problem in Islamic Studies", in *Official and Popular Religion: Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies,* ed. P.H. Vrijhof & J. Waardenburg (Paris & New York, Mouton, 1979) 355.

3. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam,* II, 266.

4. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ṣanhājī, *Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwā' al-Furūq* (Beirut, ʻĀlam al-Kutub, n.d.) IV, 202.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 202 f.

7. *Ibid.*, 203.

8. *Ibid.*, 204.

9. *Ibid.*, 204 f.

10. *Ibid.*, 205.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, 202. See also Muḥammad ʻAlī al-Makkī al-Mālikī, *Tahdhīb al-Furūq,* IV, 221.

13. Al-Makkī, *loc. cit.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. See al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* I, 37.

17. Al-Makkī, *Tahdhīb al-Furūq,* IV, 224 f.

18. *Ibid.*, 225 f.

19. *Ibid.*, 226.

20. See al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 65–71.

21. Al-Makkī, *Tahdhīb al-Furūq,* IV, 227 f.

22. *Ibid.*, 229.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. Al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 3.

26. Abū Shāma, *al-Bā'ith,* 19.

27. Al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 15.

28. *Ibid.*, 16.

29. *Ibid.*, 16 f.

30. *Ibid.*, 17.

31. Koran, 7 (al-A'rāf): 163, cited by al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 17.

32. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* IX, 314 f. (brackets added).

33. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* II, 332.

34. Al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith,* 27 f.

35. See *ibid.*, 37–54.

36. *Ibid.*, 75.

37. See *ibid.*, 75–81, 163 f.

38. *Ibid.*, 94–97, 131, 137.

39. Al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects (al-Farḳ bain al-Firaḳ)* pt. ii, 12.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal,* ed. ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz al-Wakīl (Cairo, Dār al-Ittiḥād al-ʻArabī, 1968) I, 12 f.

43. *Ibid.,* 13.

44. *Ibid.,* 14.

45. *Ibid.,* 42.

46. See *ibid.,* 43–112.

47. Another book similar to these was *al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal* written by Ibn Ḥazm (384–456/994–1063). A second edition of this work was published with al-Shahrastānī's work on the margin by Dār al-Maʻārif in Beirut in 1975. Ibn Ḥazm's work is not included here because the author did not belong to the four major schools of jurisprudence, but rather to the Ẓāhirite school. The book is, nevertheless, an important source of information on the sects of Islam.

48. Al-ʻIzz b. ʻAbd al-Salām, *Qawāʻid al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* (Cairo, Dār al-Sharq, 1968) II, 204 f.

49. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʻtiṣām,* I, 191 f.

50. See *ibid.,* II, 111 f.

51. Abū Shāma, *al-Bāʻith,* 19.

52. *Ibid.,* 22 f.

53. *Ibid.,* 23 f.

54. Muḥammad Bakhīt al-Muṭiʻī, *Kitāb Aḥsan al-Kalām fīmā yataʻallaqa*

bi-'l-Sunna wa-'l-Bid'a min Aḥkām, 2nd ed. (Cairo, Jam'iyyat al-Azhār al-'Ilmiyya, 1939) 44.

55. For further details on the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān,* IV, 117 f.

56. H. Fuchs, art. "Mawlid", *SEI.*

57. Abū Shāma, *al-Bā'ith,* 25.

58. *Ibid.,* 28.

59. *Ibid.,* 32.

60. *Ibid.,* 31 f.

61. *Ibid.,* 34.

62. *Ibid.,* 41–48.

63. See *ibid.,* 91–102.

64. *Ibid.,* 23.

65. Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1968) 3 f.

66. *Ibid.,* 4.

67. Koran, 35 (Fāṭir): 6.

68. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs,* 5f.

69. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* I, 18.

70. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs,* 7–10.

71. *Ibid.,* 19.

72. See *ibid.,* 11–14.

73. *Ibid.,* 16.

74. *Ibid.*, 17.

75. H. Laoust, art, "Ibn al-Djawzī", *EI*².

76. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, 169–320.

77. *Ibid.*, 171–4.

78. D.S. Margoliouth, "The Devil's Delusion", *Islamic Cutlure*, IX (1935) 2.

79. J.D. Waardenburg, "Official and Popular Religion", 349 f.

80. M.W. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 129.

81. L. Massigon, art. "Taṣawwuf", *SEI*.

82. Muḥammad Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, *Ittibā' al-Sunan wa-Ijtināb al-Bida'*, ed. Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Qahwajī & Maḥmūd Arnā'ūṭ (Damascus & Beirut, Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987) 19–26.

83. *Ibid.*, 29.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*, 35 f.

86. *Ibid.*, 37–76.

CHAPTER FIVE

LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF *BIDʿA*

In this chapter we will explore the discussion of the concept of *bidʿa* during the period between roughly the seventh and the twelfth centuries A.H. The exploration will, as in the previous chapters, follow in historical sequence the discussion of the subject within the four major schools of jurisprudence. It will be seen that the discussion during this period was a continuation of that which that took place in the early and middle periods as to whether *bidaʿ* could be divided into good and bad (the idea of the Shāfiʿite scholar al-Suyūṭī [849-911/1445-1505]) or into the five categories of legal valuation (adopted by the Mālikite scholar Usuman dan Fodio [1168-1233/1754-1817] and the Ḥanafite scholar Idrīs al-Turkumānī), ideas which were strongly opposed by al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) and Ibn Taymiyya (661-728/1262-1327). This period is also a continuation of the preceding in terms of the discussion of the varied credal, ritual, and custom innovations.

One of the main characteristics of this period, however, is the great

effort made to establish the theoretical aspects of the discussion of *bid'a,* an emphasis which is clearly discernible in the writings of al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Taymiyya. The period is also characterized by the deep concern felt among scholars actively to reform Muslim society. It was a period which also witnessed the rapid emergence of new innovations. This may be due to the conversion of the Mongols and Turks, although it is true that the Mamluks, who ruled the Eastern Mediterranean from A.D. 1250 to 1517, succeeded in defeating the Tatars who had destroyed the 'Abbāsid caliphate and in waging war against the Crusaders.[1] Also during the Mamluk period, the Sufis, who were behind many innovations related to the veneration of saints, were very active and enjoyed a marked degree of social respect. As D. Little has commented,

> We can think of Sufis who, in contrast to Muslims with a formal, legalistic approach to Islam, followed strange paths of self mortification, even self annihilation, to find union with God. By this time the Sufis had won the battle for orthodox respectability and had their own institutions which, like mosques and schools, were built and staffed under Mamluk patronage.[2]

So it is clear that some beliefs and practices which were adopted by the Sufis 'were clearly remnants of other religious traditions... They also made themselves conspicuous by their appearance, wearing iron collars around their necks, and chains on their shoulders and wrists...'[3]

Another characteristic of this period was that it produced distinguished scholars both in terms of writers, such as al-Shāṭibī, Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Ḥājj

(d. 737/1336), and al-Turkumānī, and also those who engaged in religious and political leadership as well as writing specifically about the concept of *bidʿa,* that is such people as Usuman dan Fodio and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.

Ḥanafite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bidʿa*

In this section we have only one representative of the Ḥanafīte school of jurisprudence, that is Idrīs b. Baydakīn al-Turkumānī who lived during the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries A.D. His book with which we are concerned is his *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Ḥawādith wa-'l-Bidaʿ*, in the introduction to which he explained that he had been requested to write something on *bidaʿ* which contradict the Koran and the *Sunna.* He responded positively and began by asking Allāh to purify his intentions.[4] Al-Turkumānī completed this work at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, during the month of Ramaḍān, in Mecca.[5] He divided *bidaʿ* into the four categories of permissible, recommended, undesirable, and forbidden. In his book, however, he only mentions blameworthy innovations, i.e. the categories of undesirable and forbidden *bidaʿ*, both in action and utterance since innovations may be of either kind.[6] Al-Turkumānī observed that Allāh says, 'To Him mount up (all) Words of Purity: it is He Who exalts each Deed of Righteousness.'[7] Commenting on this verse, al-Turkumānī said, 'The interpreter of the Koran said the words "purity" and "deed of righteousness" cover what is consonant with the *Sunna.*'[8] His division of innovations into four categories is strange enough because the categories of legal valuations are five, so

it is possible that he simply overlooked the first one which is the obligatory. Al-Turkumānī rejected the idea of the 'distinction between praiseworthy and objectionable *bida'*. [9]

His discussion of *bid'a* focused on the practices of *bid'a* in general while, in particular, he was concerned with the Mamluk Turks

> who had taken over Islam later than the Egyptians and Syrians. These Turkish people should also, in his opinion, give up those habits and customs which were, according to the Qur'ān and the Prophetic traditions, objectionable. For only he proves his love of the Prophet, who precisely follows his teachings and does not offend against them.[10]

Al-Turkumānī discussed *bid'a* from both a jurist's and preacher's point of view, often repeating himself with much evidence and many examples. This was possibly for two reasons. Firstly, he was eager to convince his own people in order that they should rid themselves of innovations. He 'always has more evidence for his arguments at hand, since he quoted from legal books, biogaphical and literary works, and also from the Ṣūfī books, [and] the Diwans of the poets.'[11] Secondly, it was possibly because the Arabic language was not his mother tongue; indeed, he 'admitted openly that his Arabic was not exemplary.'[12]

At the beginning of his account he emphasizes the necessity of following the Koran and the *Sunna.* This Sunnite belief was supported by a number of verses from the Koran, some *ḥadīths* from the *Sunna,* and a selection of

Companions' traditions.[13] Al-Turkumānī linked the fundamental Sunnite belief in following the Koran and the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations, with the additional belief in the necessity of commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil.[14] This latter Sunnite belief would help to maintain the first belief. Al-Turkumānī asserted that Allāh has said, 'Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.'[15] He added that Allāh also says, '(They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer, and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with God rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.'[16]

After this introduction, al-Turkumānī went on to discuss ritual innovations related to the reciting of and listening to the Koran. He cited many examples of innovation in this matter, such as recitation by beardless men who have a pleasant appearance and attract many people to hear them, recitation of the Koran before funerals or in the markets or when moving, beating one's chest and pulling out the hair of the beard.[17] Al-Turkumānī stated that Allāh says, 'had We sent down this Qur'ān on a mountain, verily, thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave.'[18] Al-Turkumānī used this verse to explain that if the Koran should have been revealed to a mountain, it would have humbled itself and cleaved, contrary to the lack of response from human beings. The objection of al-Turkumānī to the recitation of the Koran in the markets and streets was that in these situations people are too busy to listen properly to the words of the

Koran.[19]

Another significant manifestation of innovation discussed by al-Turkumānī was the associations of *futuwwāt* and mystics. The term *futuwwa* was introduced in about the

> 2nd/8th century as the counterpart of *muruwwa*... the qualities of the mature man, to signify that which is regarded as characteristic of the *fatā*, pl. *fityān*, literally "young man"; by this term it has become customary to denote various movements and organizations which until the beginning of the modern era were wide-spread throughout all the urban communities of the Muslim East.[20]

It is not our concern to trace the historical background of these associations, but it is important to note that the *futuwwa* was 'strictly speaking an urban phenomenon. Naturally it happened that, in the course of their activities, the *fityān* went beyond urban boundaries and mingled with other social categories.'[21] Al-Turkumānī was especially conscious of these associations and 'considered their attitude to be among the most reprehensible *bid'a* [*sic*] of his time, as these institutions did not agree with canonical Islamic law, and even the admission of a young man, *al-fatā*, into *futuwwa* association was objectionable.'[22] Al-Turkumānī was concerned also with their acts, such as their gathering at the event known as *al-tadhkira* ('reminder') when a beardless man would be present and would submit in front of others to being undressed and then reclothed, followed later by the drinking of salty water.[23] Al-Turkumānī

went further and stated that their attempt to justify their associations by tracing their founding back to the Caliph 'Alī, is worse than their actions.[24] They

> maintained that 'Alī had been the most important *fatā* and the real patron of the *futuwwa* and that his sword *Dhu-l-fiqār* had been the true sword. Thus the saying of the *futuwwa* "no sword but *Dhu-l-fiqār* and no *fatā* but 'Alī" which was not binding for at-Turkumānī.[25]

He appealed to the rulers to abolish this evil practice and appealed at the same time to individuals to participate in commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil if they were able to do so, otherwise they would incur blame.[26] This he followed by citing the words of Allāh: 'Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God...'[27]

Another practice of the *futuwwa* associations discussed by al-Turkumānī was the conduct of the marksmen (*rumāh*) in shooting at birds and also swearing by a name other than that of Allāh to improve their skill. The latter act was, in al-Turkumānī's estimation, worse than the former as it was believed that the archer would hit the target if he swore by some name other than that of God. If this report is true, commented al-Turkumānī, then it is from a very sinful people.[28] He explained that permissible hunting, which involved no condemnable innovation, was the hunting of birds without causing them unnecessary pain or damaging fields which did not belong to the hunters.[29]

Another issue discussed by al-Turkumānī was the acts of the Qalandariyya dervishes.[30] Their shaving off their beards, mustaches, and eyebrows was, in al-Turkumānī's opinion, a cursed novelty and an imitation of the practices of the Mazdains.[31] He also attacked the Marāziqa who were active in Egypt and Syria.[32] These people

> supposedly followed the Shāfi'ī-rites. This he [al-Turkumānī] doubts, since the Marāziqa, who named themselves after a certain Marzūq, introduced innovations which belong neither to the Sunna nor to the Shāfi'ī-rites. For example Marzūq advised his followers to pray only behind a man they knew and trusted, and they taught that in matters of faith one could only trust somebody whom one did know personally. Just as one should not trust somebody unknown with his worldly business, so one should also be careful in matters of faith.[33]

Al-Turkumānī opposed this analogy, explaining that religious matters are only determined by the Koran and the *Sunna* and not by opinions.[34] Another, and worse, innovation held by them, he said, was their rejection of young people's repentance (*tawbat al-shabāb*). This, he said, was totally opposed to the Koran and the *Sunna*,[35] for in the Koran Allāh says, 'Say to the Unbelievers, if (now) they desist (from Unbelief), their past would be forgiven them,'[36] and in another place, 'Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins..."'[37] Overall, al-Turkumānī

did not reject mysticism absolutely, but only the radical and extreme groups of Ṣūfīs. However, he advised all Ṣūfīs to take the early mystics as an example, and thoroughly study Islamic learning before they ventured into the loneliness

which is the life of a hermit.[38]

Al-Turkumānī also opposed some of the conduct of individual Sufis such as reserving a place in the first row of worshippers in the mosque and coming late to prayer.[39] Another, less common, Sufi practice condemned by al-Turkumānī was their rejection of marriage.[40]

Another important area of concern for al-Turkumānī was that of *bida'* peculiar to woman. He vigorously attacked their singing, dancing, beating of breasts, and the public display of unveiled faces in Mecca during the *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) or *'umra* (minor *ḥajj*) seasons. Al-Turkumānī complained that these were not the acts of pious women, but rather of sinful women who opposed the *Sunna* of the Prophet.[41] He also condemned the practice of some villagers who decorated brides and allowed everyone to see them, including slaves and dissolute people. This too, he said, was an imitation of Mazdain customs. Al-Turkumānī also condemned the practice of assigning eunuchs to apply the bride's decorations, and the practice of keeping mixed company and dancing together in festivals.[42] In this connection, he also condemned those who bought female slaves and taught them to dance and sing.[43] In addition, he mentions briefly some other transgressions of women against the pure Law. It was forbidden for women to visit graves, as they could disturb the dignity and peace of the cemetery with their crying and lamenting. Visiting graves was reserved for men only.[44]

There remains the important question dealt with in al-Turkumānī's book of the imitation of Jewish and Christian practices in their festivals. Greater attention is paid to the imitation of Christian practices since it was with Christians that Muslims had greater contact during his time and al-Turkumānī takes particular notice of the practices of the Coptic community in Egypt. Al-Turkumānī started by warning Muslims not to take Christians or Jews as close associates (*awliyā'*), because Allāh specifically forbids it:[45] 'O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust.'[46] With this as background, al-Turkumānī attacked the Muslim imitation of the Christian (actually Mazdain) celebration of the Nawrūz[47] festival by spending a great deal of money on varieties of unusual foods and by colouring eggs. He also attacked Muslims who imitated Christians in celebrating the birth of Jesus by eating sugar cane and burning candles on that day.[48] Al-Turkumānī's condemnation of these practices is based on two principles. First, to imitate other religions is a transgression of Islamic law; and second, it is a waste of money which Muslims are commanded not to do,[49] since Allāh says, 'Waste not by excess: for God loveth not the wasters.'[50]

According to al-Turkumānī, praising the monks or the priests and visiting them for blessings is worse than participating in their celebrations.[51] Also,

many Muslims even made votive offerings to churches and monasteries. In his [al-Turkumānī's] opinion they were all sinners who imagined that the monks had through ascetic training, reached the highest stage of enlightenment, the *Mukashafa* and could create an inner light through hunger. This *Mukashafa* misled the Muslims, who awaited some kind of miracle. Such miracles were, according to at-Turkumānī, only of worldly origin, and could not succeed in drawing attention from their lack of godliness. Therefore he proposed that Christian miracle workers and monks be prevented from appearing in public by Islamic authorities.[52]

He also vigorously attacked those Muslims who wore the cross at Easter to attract a blessing, and those who coloured their eyes in order to cure illness.[53] He also criticized the celebration of the day of the [Christian] martyr in the land of Egypt.[54] Also, a

> thanksgiving festival for the annual Nile flooding, strongly criticised by orthodox Islamic legal scholars, is dealt with. In at-Turkumānī's opinion it had once been abandoned, but the Masālima [Copts who converted to Islam] had reintroduced it.[55]

Towards the end of the book al-Turkumānī asked his follow-believers to repent, fear Allāh, follow Allāh's commandments, and perform prayer in congregation.[56] He concluded his work with a discussion of faith (*īmān*), saying,

> Know that we believe in God, His angels, His apostles, His books, His throne, the balance which will be set for the deeds of creatures, the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), reward and punishment in the graves, life after death...

> [and that] the Koran is the word of God.[57]

Going further, he mentioned some of the fundamental beliefs of the Sunnites such as their attitude of due reverence towards the Companions and avoidance of reference to the differences that existed between them. Finally, he supplicated Allāh that Muslims may become established in the straight path and not deviate like innovators such as the members of *futuwwāt* and Qalandariyya associations.[58] Apart from the discussion of faith, towards the end of his book, al-Turkumānī was mainly concerned with the discussion of ritual and also custom innovations (but with more emphasis on ritual innovations) related to prayer, mosques, festivals, and recitation of the Koran. Even in his discussion of the *futuwwa* and Qalandariyya groups he concentrated on their acts related to ritual innovations.

In all, al-Turkumānī attempted to cover a huge subject in this treatise. This was because of his eagerness to abolish the innovations practised during his time. Yet, he 'was only able to deal with the most important transgressions against the Sunna, since he was convinced that there were so many that he could have written several volumes.'[59]

Mālikite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bidʿa*

In this section we have to deal with some substantial representatives of

the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. We begin the exmination with Ibn al-Ḥājj who died in 737/1336. He is not widely known as a writer on *bidʿa,* which is due to the fact that his treatment of *bidʿa* is scattered throughout his huge work, *al-Madkhal.* This book is not specific to the discussion of *bidʿa* as a whole, but is a compilation of legal opinions, a relation of the conduct of the Prophet (i.e. the *Sunna*), and a discussion of certain innovations. In his introduction, Ibn al-Ḥājj explains that his book is both an exhortation to good deeds performed with religious intention and a warning against certain innovations.[60] As we shall see in the following, his discussion of innovations was mainly limited to ritual innovations although he treated custom innovations as well.

The general method of Ibn Ḥājj in *al-Madkhal* is first to discuss each issue from the point of view of the *Sunna* or of Islamic law (the *Sharīʿa*), and then to discuss specific innovations. These are our major concern and include such matters of custom as the ethics of eating, visiting the sick, and the attire of women.

On the matter of the ethics of eating, Ibn al-Ḥājj explained that it is *bidʿa* for the individual to have special plates and glasses which are only used by him and from which others are not allowed to eat. This conduct is opposed by the action of the Prophet when he drank with ʿĀ'isha (the Prophet's wife) from the same vessel. Ibn al-Ḥājj added that it is also *bidʿa* to eat while someone is standing beside you, as this was an imitation of the Persian people.[61] Concerning

the visiting of the sick, he explained that it was an innovation not to visit the sick on Saturday because this innovation was introduced by a Jewish person on account of the Sabbath.[62] Concerning the attire of women, he explained that it was an innovation to wear tight clothing that revealed a woman's shape, particularly the breasts. This conduct, he said, was *bid'a* because the Prophet ordered women not to wear tight clothing.[63]

This method was pursued further by Ibn al-Ḥājj, particularly in his discussion of festivals, which he divided broadly into three kinds. The first consisted of those festivals (*a'yād,* sing. *'īd*) legitimized by the *Sharī'a,* that is the festival of *al-Aḍḥā* (the sacrifice of the 10th Dhū al-Ḥijja), the festival of *al-Fiṭr* (on the conclusion of the fast of Ramaḍān), and *'Āshūrā'* (on the 10th Muḥarram). Concerning *'Īd al-Aḍḥā,* he discussed in detail how to follow the *Sunna* on that day by, for instance, performing the *'īd* prayer and sacrificing an animal. Contrary to these prescribed forms, he discussed certain innovations that had come to be practised on that day such as visiting the graves immediately after the *'īd* prayer. In the same light also he discussed *'Īd al-Fiṭr.*[65]

The second kind of festival he discussed consisted of those celebrations which people thought were derived from the *Sharī'a* but which in actual fact did not belong to the *Sharī'a* at all. The first example of these was the respect paid to the month of Rajab by the special prayers that had recently been introduced during the time of al-Ṭurṭūshī in al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem called *al-ṣalāt*

al-Rajabiyya. Al-Ṭurṭūshī had also condemned this ritual practice, just as Ibn al-Ḥajj did when he asserted that there is no trace of *Ḥadīth* or *Sunna* proving that this species of worship was practised in the mosque during the time of the Prophet and his Companions.[66] Another example of festivals which had no foundation in the *Sharī'a* was the celebration of the night of *Mi'rāj* when the Prophet ascended to Heaven. In addition, Ibn al-Ḥājj condemned the congregational prayer by night in the middle of the month of Sha'bān as a *bid'a* of a similar sort.[68] Living in the same century as the Ḥanbalite scholar Ibn Taymiyya (whose opinions will be reviewed later), Ibn al-Ḥājj, a Mālikite, shared the same dislike of certain innovations such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday and the visiting of saints' graves which involved certain acts that had no foundation in the *Sunna*.[69] Considering these similarities more closely, it is noticeable that Ibn al-Ḥājj discussed the celebration of the Prophet's birthday very thoroughly, referring to the practices common in his own day, such as singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments which he thought to be not permissible. He also suggested that the women who attended this celebration might cause mischief among the attendants during the night.[70] While Ibn al-Ḥājj made the above comments in condemnation of the festival, he did not deal with its origins in the way that the Ḥanbalite scholars did whose views will be considered below. Thus, as we may judge from his writing, Ibn al-Ḥājj condemned the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet outright. Secondly, with regard to the visiting of the saints' graves, Ibn al-Ḥajj condemned this practice without any deep consideration being made of it, such as the Ḥanbalites

sought to present.

The third kind of festival that he dealt with was those of the Jews and Christians (the people of the book). Ibn al-Ḥājj explained that it is true that some Muslims participated in the festivals of the people of the book such as *Sabt al-Nūr* (Holy Saturday) and the birth of Jesus (Christmas).[71]

While Ibn al-Ḥājj was concerned about the above ritual practices, he also discussed innovations introduced into the mosques such as building more than three steps on the pulpit (*minbar*), the decoration of the prayer niche (*miḥrāb*), the use of the rosary, and the establishment of a box in the mosque in which to keep the rosaries.[72] Another example of ritual innovation he condemned was the *raghā'ib* ('wishes') prayer in congregation. Ibn al-Ḥājj discussed this form of prayer in detail in order to refute the opinion of those who refused to admit that it was an innovation.[73]

Overall, it is very difficult to describe Ibn al-Ḥājj's work because of the diversity of subjects he attempts to discuss. However, it is very clear that he was deeply concerned about ritual innovations and the daily conduct and ethics of Muslim people.

Ibn al-Ḥājj often quoted from the Mālikite scholar, Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī, and this seems to have been one reason why he, like al-Ṭurṭūshī, was

principally concerned with ritual innovations. Furthermore, he 'did not mention some of the *bid'a*s, for instance the *futuwwa* association, which at-Turkumānī dealt with, but on the other hand gave more complete information about *bid'a* in the sphere of craftsmanship, manufacturing and business life.'[74] Thus, Ibn al-Ḥājj was clearly concerned with the affairs of daily life and the promotion of good conduct which has its grounds in religion. He tried to 'popularize his learning, as a jurist who was to a certain extent a director of conscience, being one who considered "knowledge" and "action" to be inseparable.'[75] In this respect there is a similarity between Ibn al-Ḥājj's book and al-Ghazālī's monumental *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn.* Ibn al-Ḥājj based his work on the principles according to which 'an act of worship without the exact *intention* cannot be in accordance with the law' and he stated that 'an act of worship consists of two parts: the first is the attitude of the body, the second the intention of the heart, but it is the second which is the more important.'[76] Furthermore, there is a similarity between Ibn al-Ḥājj's book and the account given by Ibn al-Ukhūwa in his *Ma'ālim al-Qurba fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisba* of the necessity for proper conduct in daily life and reformation of behaviour. While there are overlaps in this respect, nevertheless Ibn al-Ukhūwa did not deal with private conduct, but was essentially concerned with the office of *ḥisba,* i.e. the regulation of public conduct.[77] We should remember that Ibn al-Ḥājj's emphasis on the intention (*niyya*) of the heart stemmed from the fact that he had been asked to write something about intention with respect to the following matters: going to the mosque, attending study circles, buying items in the market, and returning home.[78]

Ibn al-Ḥājj held to the view that *bid'a* is always something evil and quoted the Shāfi'ite scholar al-Ghazālī who said, 'The whole *umma* have agreed wholeheartedly to condemn *bid'a* and to wage war on the innovator.'[79] Nevertheless, in his second volume Ibn al-Ḥājj seems to be in agreement with those scholars who divided *bida'* into the five categories of obligatory innovation, recommended innovation, permissible innovation, undesirable innovation, and prohibited innovation.[80] This apparent contradiction between the approach in the first and second volumes may be due to the fact that Ibn al-Ḥājj wrote his work in two stages. In clarification, he explained that he wrote some of the work and then decided that he lacked the competence to be a writer of books which was a task for the scholars. He therefore passed the work to one of his friends whom he requested to throw it into the sea. After a year, another scholar and friend of Ibn al-Ḥājj, Ibn Sab', enquired about the work and Ibn al-Ḥājj informed him that he had given it to a friend whom he had asked to get rid of it. Ibn Sab' expressed some disapproval and asked Ibn al-Ḥājj to go and check with the friend whom he had commissioned to dispose of the work. This he did and found that his friend had failed to act on his request. Ibn Sab' expressed admiration for Ibn al-Ḥājj's work and encouraged him to complete it.[81] The story indicates that there was a break in writing of one year, which might explain why Ibn al-Ḥājj came to pen two different opinions in each half of the work.

Concerning the condemnation of *bid'a* in general, Ibn al-Ḥājj, like

al-Turkumānī, links the principle of condemning innovation with the obligation to command what is good and forbid what is evil (*wujūb al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa-'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*). This principle is a significant and recurring theme in Islam in which the constant need was felt to propagate righteousness and purify the Muslim community from evil. The command to do right and prohibit wrong can, wrote Ibn al-Ḥājj, be achieved in three stages which are mentioned in the following *ḥadīth:*

> On the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, who said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart - that is the weakest of faith.'"[82]

Ibn al-Ḥājj insists that the teacher himself must first apply to himself the command to do good and to forbid evil before he attempts to change others' behaviour. In this context he also urges the Muslim community to correct evil at least by tongue if it is possible. He further warns Muslims against the adoption of evil practices by imitating their fathers, asserting that if they refuse to alter their behaviour they might face the same fate as preceding generations. This attitude of theirs he sees reflected in the words of the Koran: 'Nay! they say: "We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps.'"[83]

We will conclude this part by noting an interesting contrast between Ibn

al-Ḥājj and al-Turkumānī drawn by S. Labib who commented,

> The themes of the books of at-Turkumānī and Ibn al-Ḥādjdj overlap. The style and attitude of at-Turkumānī are, due to his orthodox faith, more passionate than with Ibn al-Ḥādjdj. At-Turkumānī deals with his subjects more thoroughly and in the eagerness of his presentation repeats himself often, whereas, Ibn al-Ḥādjdj due to his calmer approach, expresses himself more concisely and to the point.[84]

This is not to suggest that Ibn al-Ḥājj was unorthodox in any way; the differences are merely those of personal style and apparent emotional involvement.

We are left to conclude this section by discussing one of the greatest contributors to the discussion of *bid'a,* that is al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388). His treatise, *al-I'tiṣām,* is a discrete work on the subject of *bid'a.* While it is not absolutely clear why al-Shāṭibī produced this work, there are two probable reasons which may have motivated him in its compilation. The first is that he had been accused of introducing innovation, as we will consider further below, so that he would have been eager to clear his personal reputation with regard to *bid'a.* Secondly, as a theorist of Islamic law, al-Shāṭibī no doubt recognized the need for a work discussing *bid'a* from a theoretical point of view. This theoretical and legal approach renders the work different in character from the preceding works.

In his treatise al-Shāṭibī vehemently condemns *bid'a.* It is a

condemnation based on two distinct methods of treatment. Firstly, it is based on text (*naql*) and secondly, it is based on observation (*naẓar*). The former approach involves the citing of the Koran, Prophetic traditions, Companions' traditions and those of their followers, and including Sufi sayings. Most of the Koranic verses and *ḥadīths* cited by al-Shāṭibī appear in Chapter Two of the present study,[85] although elsewhere he does occasionally cite some verses, e.g. the words of Allāh: 'On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black...'[86] On the interpretation of this verse he referred to the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās who had commented, 'The faces of the people who follow the *Sunna* will be white but the innovators will have gloomy, black faces.'[87] He goes on to explain that he quoted such famous Sufis as Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d. 227/841), Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād (d. 187/802), and Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 161/777) who condemned innovation, because these people were good followers of the *Sunna.* However, the later Sufis who entered the Sufi path without any real understanding of the purpose of asceticism might have practised some innovations. However, the early Sufis, or ascetics, were careful followers of the *Sunna.* Thus, al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād said, 'Whoever sits with an innovator will not be granted wisdom.'[88]

Al-Shāṭibī's second approach to *bid'a,* that based on observation (*naẓar*), can be summed up by saying that since *Shari'a* is complete and final, anyone who innovates, commits, among other sins, two grave errors. One is the implication of equality or rather superiority to God, the original Lawgiver, because the promulgation of *bid'a* implies that the innovator knows more than

> God about *Shari'a*. Second, he relies more on human reason and desires than on the intentions of the Lawgiver.[89]

These words of al-Shāṭibī show very clearly that he took a strong exception to innovators based on his knowledge of *uṣūl al-fiqh* which enabled him to arrive at this verdict. Mas'ud has noted that al-Shāṭibī's interest in *uṣūl al-fiqh* sprang from his feeling 'that the weakness of *fiqh* in meeting the challenge of social change was due largely to its methodological and philsophical inadequacy.'[90] This apparent feebleness had been noted by al-Shāṭibī during his early training and so he said,

> Ever since the curiosity of my intellect was aroused for understandng (things) and ever since my anxiety was directed towards knowledge, I always looked into its (the *Sharī'a*'s) reasons and legalities; its roots and its branches. As far as the time and my ability permitted I did not fall short of any science among the sciences, nor did I single one out of the others. I exploited my natural capacity or rather plunged into this tumultuous sea... So much so that I feared to destroy myself in its depth... Until God showed His kindness to me and clarified for me the meanings of *Sharī'a* which had been beyond my reckoning... From here I felt strong enough to walk on the path as long as God made it easier for me. I started with the principles of religion (*uṣūl al-Dīn*) in theory and in practice and the branches, based on these problems. (It was) during this period (that) it became clear to me what were the *bida'* and what was lawful and what was not.[91]

Al-Shāṭibī stood firm against the idea of dividing *bida'* into good and evil, as he did also against the concept of dividing *bida'* according to the five

categories of legal valuation which have been discussed earlier in the section on Shāfi'ite attitudes. He refuted this procedure with the assertion that this was itself an innovation which has no foundation in the *Sharī'a*. Furthermore, he said, this is a contradictory proposition, because a *bid'a* has no ground or evidence in the texts (*nuṣūṣ*) of the *Sharī'a* or in the foundations (*qawā'id*) of the *Sharī'a*. However, he added, if there is evidence in the *Sharī'a* proving that a practice spoken of as *bid'a* is obligatory, recommended, or permissible, then that practice cannot, by definition, be deemed an innovation, since *bida'* only consist of those practices which are prohibited or undesirable.[92]

Al-Shāṭibī attempted to clarify the concept of innovation by fitting the terminology into a framework of legal philosophy. Having refuted the division of *bida'* into good and bad, he put in place of this a categorization of *bida'* according to legal understanding. He felt it was possible to divide *bida'* into the two categories of the essential *bid'a* (*bid'a ḥaqīqiyya*) and the relative *bid'a* (*bid'a iḍāfiyya*).[93] *Al-bid'a al-ḥaqīqiyya*

> is that which is not proven by any *shar'ī* evidence like the Qur'ān, *Sunna, ijmā'* or a reliable basis of reasoning, neither in general nor in particular. *Al-bid'a al-iḍāfiyya* is that which touches upon both aspects. In one aspect it is connected with *shar'ī* evidence; in the other it is not. It is only in the latter aspect that it is *bid'a*.[94]

He sought to explain this pronouncement by citing a verse from the Koran which, in his view, accommodated both *al-bid'a al-ḥaqīqiyya* and *al-bid'a al-iḍāfiyya*.

Thus, Allāh says concerning Jesus and his followers,

> And thereupon We caused [other of] Our apostles to follow in their footsteps; and [in the course of time] We caused them to be followed by Jesus, the son of Mary, upon whom We bestowed the Gospel; and in the hearts of those who [truly] followed him We engendered compassion and mercy. But as for monastic asceticism - We did not enjoin it upon them: they invented it themselves out of a desire for God's goodly acceptance. But then, they did not [always] observe it as it ought to have been observed: and so We granted their recompense unto such of them as had [truly] attained to faith, whereas many of them became iniquitous.[95]

Of this al-Shāṭibī said that monasticism could be accounted a *bid'a ḥaqīqiyya* because it was not prescribed for them. This, he said, is the way it can be understood if we stop (*istithnā munqaṭi'*) at this segment of the verse: 'We did not enjoin it upon them.' However, he pointed out, if we continue reading (*istithnā muttaṣil*): 'they invented it for themselves out of a desire for God's goodly acceptance', it will be *bid'a iḍāfiyya,* but then they did not [always] observe it as it ought to have been observed.[96] In other words, if we read the whole verse without any stop, it refers to a *bid'a iḍāfiyya,* that is to say, they did not follow it correctly.

He also drew a distinction between the sin of *bid'a ḥaqīqiyya* and that of *bid'a iḍāfiyya,* asserting the greater seriousness of the former. This, he said, was due to the nature of *bid'a ḥaqīqiyya* being a blatant contradiction of the *Sharī'a,* examples being belief in the sinlessness of the *Imām,* the belief that

human reason (*'aql*) has authority to approve or disapprove in matters of religion, and the rejection of the prohibition of alcohol. *Bid'a iḍāfiyya* was, he felt, less harmful because it has two dimensions, one touching upon religion while the other does not. Therefore, *al-bid'a al-iḍāfiyya* is the less culpable offence and may include such matters as the keeping of the Koran in the mosque to be used only for recitation in the Friday prayers, although the recitation of the Koran is recommended at all times and not merely on Friday.[97]

Clearly, there must be a connection between al-Shāṭibī's distinction between essential and relative *bida'* and the judgment that is actually pronounced on them. This is because it is necessary to know the nature of the particular *bid'a,* whether it is essential or relative, before it can be judged. In the second volume of his work, therefore, al-Shāṭibī discussed the judgment (*ḥukm*) of innovations which depends on what kind of innovation is involved. He said,

> As we have demonstrated that a *bid'a* can be only either undesirable or forbidden, judgment of it will therefore surely be different. Let us illustrate this by some examples. The innovations of the Khārijites, Qadarites, and Murji'ites, which are debated among the scholars as to whether they are blasphemous or not, are different from the innovations of taking an oath to fast in the sun and the intention of a person who wishes to castrate himself (*ikhtiṣā*).[98]

Thus, he drew a distinction between credal innovations, which were deemed to be major sins, and ritual innovations, which he deemed to be minor sins. Minor sins could be overlooked if they did not transgress certain conditions such as not

being practised regularly, not being propagated, not being practised in public places, and not being underestimated as minor sins.[99] His discussion went further as he argued that real innovations are those which belong to the realm of worship (*'ibādāt*) and not custom (*'ādāt*, or*'awā'id*). He stated,

> There are *'awā'id* which change with time, place and persons. If every change is condemned then everyone who differs in this respect with those Arabs who were in contact with the Companions of the Prophet... will be considered as not following them and hence deviating from the right path. This is quite difficult to accept.[100]

The implications of the above statement are very significant

> for the question of legal change. Shāṭibī, here, is saying that there are large areas of life - in fact everything except *'ibādāt* - where the concept of *bid'a* does not apply. The implication is that *Sharī'a* does not control these areas of life or at least does not control them in the same sense as it controls the relation between man and God.[101]

Al-Shāṭibī is distinguished from other Mālikite scholars in two aspects. First, he is the first scholar who developed the theoretical discussion of *bid'a* on a grand scale as is evidenced by the two large volumes containing this discussion. Second, he was the first scholar to treat *bid'a* from a fundamental (*uṣūlī*) point of view in addition to its discussion within the realm of legal opinions.

This latter consideration is illustrated by his statement that it has been

proved by the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* that the actions and utterances of human beings can be classified into three kinds: obligatory (*wājib*), prohibited (*muḥarram*), and permissible (*mubāh*). The category of prohibited actions is ruled by two considerations. The first is that it is prohibited by the literal text of the law (Koran and *Sunna*). The second consideration is that it is opposed to the spirit of the *Sharī'a*.[102]

Again in the field of *uṣūl al-fiqh,* al-Shāṭibī produced two definitions of *bid'a* which are similar except that the first does not include matters of custom (*'ādāt*) but only matters of worship (*'ibādāt*), while the second includes both matters of custom and of worship. His first definition of introducing *bid'a* is that it is 'to invent a mode, way or element in religion which has no ground at all attached to it, parallel to the original religion (*tuḍāhī al-ṭarīqa al-Shar'iyya*). The purpose of this adoption is exaggeration in the worship of God.' His second definiton of introducing *bid'a* is that it is 'to invent a mode, way, or element in religion which has no ground at all attached to it, parallel to the original religion. The purpose of this adoption is to gain acceptance [for that which has been invented] as a part of the original religion.'[103] The difference between the two definitions is very fine and appears only in the latter part or purpose implied in each definition. The first definition has in view only matters of worship such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday as a set feast, fasting on the middle day of the month of Sha'bān, and performing special prayers at night. So the first definition does not refer to matters of custom, such as the use of a sieve, while

the second definition does include such matters.[104] In order to spell out his meaning even more clearly, al-Shāṭibī drew attention to the fact that he was speaking of innovations 'in religion (*dīn*)' and that if innovations belonged exclusively to the realm of mundane matters (*al-dunyā*), there could be no question of *bidʿa* being involved. Examples he cited of these mundane matters included innovations in crafts and in the plans of cities, and he affirmed that the qualification *bidʿa* excludes such matters as these which have their basis in the canonical law of Islam (*al-Sharʿ*).[105]

As a theorist of Islamic law (*uṣūlī*), al-Shāṭibī devoted a whole chapter to drawing a distinction between innovations in religion and those matters of human welfare or interest (*al-maṣāliḥ al-mursala*). The drawing of this distinction he felt to be important because of the confusion of some people who acounted certain acts of the Companions as innovations when in fact they were merely matters of human welfare, such as the collection of the Koran.[106] Actions for the sake of human welfare may include types of new things 'where the intention and the act both conform to the purpose of *Sharīʿa*.'[107] So the distinction between innovations and actions for the sake of human welfare is that under the first category both the intention and the act do not conform with the purpose of the *Sharīʿa*, while under the latter category they do. Furthermore, al-Shāṭibī argued, human welfare as a proof (*dalīl*) is a controversial issue among scholars.[108] He

> thus, shows that the acceptable *maṣāliḥ* cannot be equated with *bidʿa* and that

they are not limited to the category of *ḍarūrī* [necessary practices], as some jurists have maintained; they cover other categories as well... *Al-maṣlaḥa al-mursala* conforms to Shāṭibī's concept of *maṣlaḥa* which is of fundamental singificance to his doctrine of *maqāṣid al-Sharī'a.*[109]

Al-Shāṭibī also devoted a large section of his second volume to discussing the reasons why the innovatory groups were different and had become separated from mainstream Islam, i.e. the Sunnites (*Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a*). He reduced the causes for division to two principal factors. The first was people's following of their desires (*ahwā'*) and neglecting the evidence of the *Sharī'a.*[110] This deviation he saw described in a verse from the Koran which pronounced:

> He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity (*zaygh*) follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.[111]

The second reason for division was people's determination to follow the habits and customs inherited from their fathers.[112] Again, he illustrated this principle by citing a verse from the Koran:

Just in the same way, whenever We sent a Warner before thee to any people, the wealthy ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps."[113]

Al-Shāṭibī took the discussion further by considering the character of the redeemed group, i.e. *Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a,* and what is meant by the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayra previously cited concerning the division of the nation into seventy-three sects. A variant of this *ḥadīth* adds the rider, 'All of them are in Hell-fire except he who follows me and my Companions'[114] Al-Shāṭibī argued that the sectarian differences must be major and related to creed.[115] He further noted how scholars had divided the principle groups of innovators into four: the Khārijites, the Rāfiḍites, the Qadarites, and the Murji'ites. These went on dividing until there were seventy-two deviant groups, yet the last group, the seventy-third, is the redeemed one. Al-Shāṭibī also cited the view of al-Ṭurṭūshī that the *ḥadīth* did not predict a literal division of the Islamic community into seventy-three sects, but only intended to cite the fragmentation of the Jewish and Christian communities as a warning to Muslims. Al-Ṭurṭūshī held the view that all of the innovatory groups could be subsumed, in one way or another, under the four categories mentioned above.[116]

Dealing with the major characteristics of the innovatory groups, al-Shāṭibī noted that their first characteristic was disagreement after guidance had been revealed. This attitude he condemned by citing the Koranic verse that

warned, 'Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty.'[117] Their second characteristic was a tendency to follow what is allegorical or obscure (*mutashābih*) and to neglect what is lucid or figuratively expressed (*muḥkam*) in the Koran, a tendency which was described in another Koranic verse: 'But those in whose hearts is perversity (*zaygh*) follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings.'[118] Their third characteristic was to follow desire (*hawā*) and their own lusts and once more al-Shāṭibī quoted from the Koran in order to underline his meaning: '...and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from God? For God guides not people given to wrong-doing.'[119] These three characteristics, he asserted, can help to identify the innovatory groups.[120]

From all of the above, it is evident that al-Shāṭibī made an important contribution to the understanding of the notion of *bid'a*. However, despite the clear position he took up in the work as an enemy of novelties in religion, he himself came to be vigorously accused of introducing innovations. The dilemma into which he fell is described in *al-I'tiṣām* in the following words:

> I had entered into some of the common professions (*khuṭaṭ*) such as *khaṭāba* (preaching) and *imāma* (leading the prayer). When I decided to straighten my path, I found myself a stranger among the majority of my contemporaries. The [*sic*] custom and practice had dominated their profession; the stains of the additional innovations had covered the original tradition (*sunna*)... I wavered between two choices; one to follow the *sunna* in opposition to what people adopted in practice. In that case I would inevitably get what

an opponent to the (social) practices would get, especially when the upholders of the practice claimed that theirs was exclusively the *sunna*... The other choice was to follow the practice in defiance of the *sunna* and the pious ancients. That would get me into deviation (from the true path)... I decided that I would rather perish while following the *sunna* to find salvation...[121]

The above passage clearly explains his ordeal, especially his decision to stand up against the innovatory practices which people had adopted. It also reflects the great difficulty there is in attempting to change the established practices of people. However, a person such as al-Shāṭibī, who had undergone great exercise of conscience in opposing innovations through his writing, felt the incumbency of taking a firm public stand against innovations regardless of the consequences of his actions in this respect. The indictment against him was on account of the opposition he expressed to some of the practices of the jurists (*fuqahā'*), such as their permitting prayer for the success of the ruler (*sulṭān*) in the sermon (*khuṭba*), and also his opposition to some practices of the Sufis which led him to be accused of enmity against the saints (*awliyā'*).[122]

In conclusion, it is clear that al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tiṣām* is completely different from previous writings on the subject of *bid'a*. This is because al-Shāṭibī's work is a detailed theoretical discussion of the concept of *bid'a*, while the majority of the preceding books were descriptive discussions of credal, ritual, and custom innovations.

We turn now to another Mālikite scholar, al-Wansharīshī (d. 914/1508),

who preserved the *fatwās* of al-Shāṭibī, as Mas'ud demonstrated in his discussion of al-Shāṭibī's work.[123] The title of al-Wansharīshī's treatise is *al-Mi'yār al-Mu'arrab wa-'l-Jāmi' al-Mughrib 'an Fatāwā 'Ulamā' Ifrīqiyā wa-'l-Andalus wa-'l-Maghrib,* which, as the title suggests, is a straightforward collection of legal opinions (*fatāwā*). While other scholars like Ibn Taymiyya, al-Shāṭibī, and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb elaborated their understanding of and attitude towards the concept of *bid'a,* al-Wansharīshī's views of the subject must be derived from the *fatwās* given by Mālikite scholars like Mālik, al-Ṭurṭūshī, and Ibn al-Ḥājj which he adduces on the subject and this is by no means an easy process. As background to an interpretation of al-Wansharīsī's views, it is useful to understand the function of the *muftī* as 'a specialist on law who can give an authoritative opinion on points of doctrine; his considered legal opinion is called *fatwā*.'[124] The work of the *muftī* is no easy task, as he must master the theoretical aspects of Islamic law and then apply them in actual circumstances. As D. Powers observed,

> individual fatwās were often collected in treatises where they are arranged according to the standard categories of Islamic legal texts. One such collection is the Kitāb al-Mi'yār of Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī... a multi-volume work containing approximately 6000 legal opinions that were issued between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries A.D. by muftis living in Ifriqiya, Morocco, and Spain.[125]

Towards the end of his second volume, al-Wansharīsī included a section devoted to legal opinions on certain innovations. The innovations mentioned by him are,

as his title suggests, likely to be regional novelties which, no doubt, had been dealt with by scholars of the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. Al-Wansharīsī's collection is specifically concerned with the question of whether the legal witness (*shahāda*) of innovators may be accepted in court. It seems most likely that it is the witness of innovators in credal matters that is considered and not the witness of innovators in ritual, as the former is by far the more serious category. Commencing with the opinion of his own legal school, the Mālikite, he explained that the witness of an innovator is to be rejected whether he preaches the innovation or not. This is because the innovator may neglect one of the conditions of valid witness which is *'adāla* (justice). Then he explained the Shāfi'ite position by quoting al-Ghazālī who stated that the witness of an innovator is to be accepted since he is not an unbeliever unless he slander or libel the Companions or 'Ā'isha. The Ḥanafites, al-Wansharīsī wrote, admit the witness of an innovator except in the case of members of the Khaṭṭābiyya sect who are the most extreme group among the Shī'ites. Lastly, al-Wansharīsī showed that the Ḥanbalites divided innovators into three groups. The first group consisted of imitators or followers who had no learning and the witness of these people was to be accepted. The second group consisted of people who had learning and were able to seek out what is right but were too preoccupied with their lives and responsibilities. The witness of this group might be either acceptable or unacceptable, depending on the kind of innovation involved. The third group consisted of those who had learning and also preached their innovations. The witness of these people was, in Ḥanbalite opinion, unacceptable

except in certain cases as, for example, when they form the majority.[126] The rejection of the witness of innovators suggests the gravity attaching to credal innovations and it was possibly for this reason that al-Wansharīsī cited the views of all four major schools of jurisprudence.

In his collection of legal opinions, it is most likely that al-Wansharīsī was principally concerned with the judgments of scholars (*'ulamā'*) of North Africa and Spain who followed the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. However, he was aware of the limitations of siding uncritically with the Mālikite school of jurisprudence and ignoring other opinions. So in this context he quoted Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī in his statement that the practice of taking sides and following blindly is a demonstration of great ignorance.[127]

From the above it is apparent that al-Wansharīsī's collection of *fatwās* was concerned with the verdicts given from a jurisprudential point of view on certain innovations which had crept into the practices of the community. One interesting conclusion which can be drawn from his treatise is that he was in favour of the division of *bida'* into good and evil. The evidence for this is simply that he devoted a whole section to favourable (*mustaḥsana*) innovations. Among the examples that he cited were the *tarāwīḥ* prayers and the gathering for supplication on the day of *'Arafa* (the 9th Dhū al-Ḥijja).[128]

We now move from North to West Africa where one of the politicallly

most powerful Mālikite scholars, Usuman dan Fodio (1168–1233/1754–1817) lived and campaigned. He came from the Fulani tribe who ruled the Hausa-speaking lands now in Nigeria. At the end of the eighteenth century the Fulani tried to establish a democratic state throughout the Western Sudan.

> During the nineteenth century, the spirit of Fulbe [Fulani] preaching remained true to Shehu Dan Fadio's standards and injunctions. Its more eminent religious leaders associated themselves also with the Qadariyyah [*sic*, i.e. Qādiriyya] *ṭarīqah* (fraternity), which was dominant throughout West Africa, up to the end of the nineteenth century.[129]

Usuman's intention in launching a holy war (*jihād*) was, with the help of his followers, to restore the role of the caliphate to the status it had held in the earliest days of Islam after the Prophet. 'In fact, as is clear from the sources which they used, their constitutional doctrines were based squarely on the theoretical constructions of the late 'Abbāsid jurists and their redactors."[130] Within himself Usuman incorporated three prime qualities. First, he was a religious leader (*shaykh*) who fought against *bidʿa;* second, he was a political leader who struggled to establish a state in order to bring people closer to the practices of the early generations and to shun innovations; and third, he was a Sufi of the Qādiriyya order which had been founded by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in the twelfth century A.D.[131] Usuman was, like his father, a Sunnite Muslim and had been brought up in the Mālikite school of jurisprudence.[132]

If we examine the writings of Fulani authors like Usuman and his

brother ʻAbd Allāh, we find that the sources they appeal to are substantially Mālikite, such as Ibn al-ʻArabī (sixth century A.H.), al-Qarāfī (seventh century A.H.), and Ibn al-Ḥājj (eighth century A.H.).[133] In addition to these, they were also influenced by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya al-Ḥanbalī (known as Ibn al-Qayyim, d. 751/1350), who was the greatest disciple of the famous scholar Ibn Taymiyya (661-728/1262-1327). It was Ibn al-Qayyim

> whose writings inspired the late movement of Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Wahhāb. The contexts in which Ibn al-Qayyim is mentioned add little to our knowledge of any part he may have played in the formation of Fulani doctrines, but they prove beyond doubt that the Fulani were acquainted with the teaching from which Wahhābism sprang.[134]

Hiskett, an expert on Nigerian Islam, draws an interesting contrast between the Wahhābīs and the Fulani who were both political in their reforming drive:

> The Fulani reformers shared with the Wahhābīs common knowledge of earlier fundamentalist teaching of the Ḥanbalī school, and their views on innovation resembled those of the Wahhābīs up to a point. But whereas the Wahhābīs developed these teachings into an exclusive and schismatic creed, Fulani Islam remained firmly grounded in Mālikī orthodoxy.[135]

It is not surprising that these two movements shared similar ideas and attitudes towards innovation, especially since both the Fulanis and the Wahhābīs represented shades of Sunnite theology.

We may now proceed to discuss the main thrust of Usuman dan Fodio's

writing in Arabic which concerns the notion of *bidʿa*. His motive for writing the *Iḥyāʾ al-Sunna wa-Ikhmād al-Bidʿa* is stated by him in his introduction as follows:

> Let the observer or the seer of this book know that my goal in it, God willing, is to revive the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad and to suppress the Satanic novelties. The aim is not always made perfect but my intention is not to bring disgrace on people nor to enlarge on people's defects. Those who intend to revive the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad and to suppress the Satanic innovations, Allāh will guide and help them. But those who intend to bring disgrace on people and to enlarge on their defects, Allāh will bring them to book for this intention.[136]

From this statement it would appear that the book was written as a guide to rulers and other people, drawing their attention to the necessity of adhering to the *Sunna* and avoiding innovations. Following his introduction, Usuman went on to define the Koran, the *Sunna,* and consensus (*ijmāʿ*), after which he emphasized the need to follow these sources of authority and to refer to them as standards for action. He stated that if one did not know for certain whether an action was right by these standards, he should enquire with those who are knowledgeable in religious matters so that they might know for certain whether something is according to the *Sunna* and therefore to be adhered to, or whether it is *bidʿa* and therefore to be shunned.[137] In his second chapter he reviewed the definitions made of *bidʿa* by various scholars and stated that it consisted of 'anything introduced or invented in religion parallel to it but in fact not a part of religion in essence or similitude.'[138] His discussion then went on to elaborate the division of *bidaʿ* into five categories according to his teacher the Mālikite scholar

al-Qarāfī and the Shāfi'ite scholar who originated and first elaborated this division, al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām. There are, he wrote, five categories of *bid'a,* which he exemplified as follows:

1. Obligatory (*wājib*), such as the collection of the Koran for preservation and use by future generations.

2. Prohibited (*muḥarram*), such as giving preference to an ignorant person and neglecting qualified scholars when appointing to a position of authority.

3. Recommended (*mandūb*), such as the *tarāwīḥ* prayers.

4. Undesirable (*makrūh*), such as specifying preferable days for performing extra religious duties which have not been prescribed.

5. Permissible (*mubāh*), such as the wearing of fine clothing.[139]

In his third chapter, Usuman mentioned what had been reported from the Companions, their followers, and the followers of the next generation concerning the necessity of adhering to the *Sunna* and avoiding novelties. In this chapter Usuman drew attention, by citing Ibn al-Ḥājj's *Madkhal,* to the excellence of the three early generations known as the Companions, their successors, and the later's followers. This was because, in his view, the best of the *umma* were these three formative generations of Islam and so his discussion broadened into a eulogy of these generations and an expression of thankfulness to them for their foresight in preserving the Koran and Prophetic traditions for the guidance of future generations.[140]

The rest of his account can, as Balogun has stated, be classified into the three main areas of Usuman's concern, which were theology, jurisprudence, and mysticism. However, while theology and mysticism occupy only a few chapters, jurisprudence seems to be the main concern in most of his chapters, in fact twenty-six out of the thirty-three chapters that compose the work. His discussion of jurisprudential topics ranges within the three main areas of:

1. Worship and rituals such as prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, ablution, the call to prayer, festival prayers, and funeral prayers (topics which engage most of the chapters).
2. Social behaviour such as etiquette attaching to eating, dress, drinking, and greetings (topics which engage the chapters on *Sunna*).
3. Forensic topics such as oaths, punishments, and sales.[141]

This method of discussing theology, mysticism, and jurisprudence presents an interesting contrast between specification of the way to achieve the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad and the explanation of Satanic innovations which people have introduced. In fact, this very phrase - "The Way to Achieve the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Explanation of the Satanic Innovations which People have Introduced" - forms part of the title of each of the chapters from Chapter Four until Chapter Thirty-three.

Usuman was aware of credal innovations (discussed briefly in Chapter Four) such as the involvement of common people in dialectical theology and their

unnecessary involvement in the mysteries of philosophers. His discussion also included an appraisal of the proper place of the science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) which he saw as a tool that could be used to defend the first article of faith: *tawḥīd*. Therefore, to condemn outright or to praise uncritically without theological elaboration is an error.[142] He was also aware of ritual innovations relating principally to matters of ablution, prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage which, as noted above, occupied the major portion of his treatise. Lastly, he took cognizance of Sufi innovations and, since he himself was a member of the Qādiriyya order, this seems proof of his genuine desire to adhere to the *Sunna* and to suppress innovations even if they come from the Sufi orders or a source outside the Sufis. He provided his readers with many examples of reprehensible Sufi innovations such as binding oneself with iron chains or ropes as a form of religious asceticism, an innovation which is prohibited by consensus since it inflicts harm.[143]

Throughout his book, Usuman was consistently aware of innovations in general and testified to the necessity of holding fast to

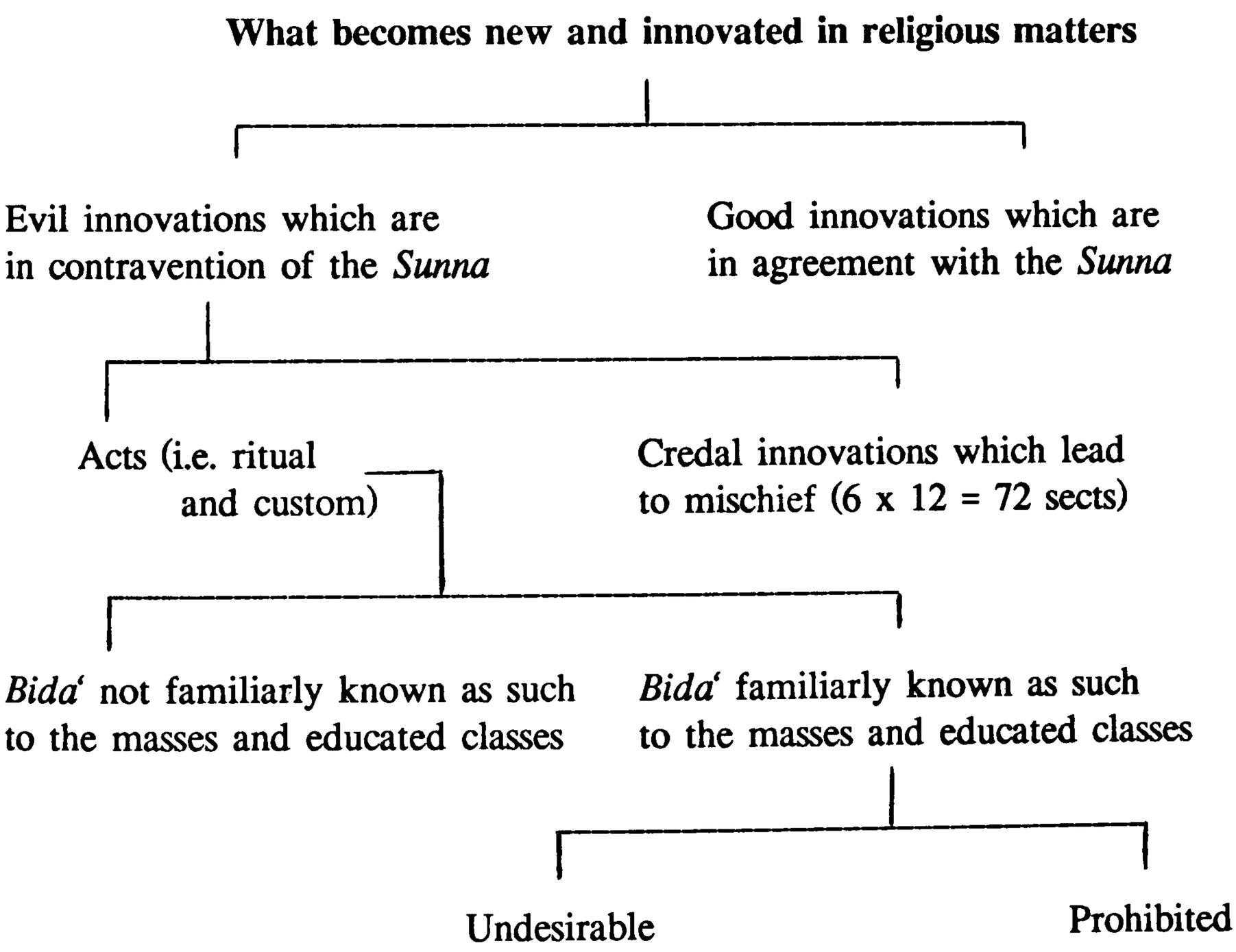
> the *Sunna* of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and give him peace), and to what their followers, and the followers of the followers did with regard to observing the *Sunna*, and to [the pattern of] their praiseworthy lives, for they were the ones to whose virtue the Prophet (may God bless him and give him peace) testified. So, whatever they did, we will do and whatever they avoided, we will avoid.[144]

This statement testifies clearly to the concern that Usuman had for the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad, a concern which reappears in explicit words at the end of his work where he explained that his intention in writing the book was to revive the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad and to suppress Satanic innovations. He asserted also that it was the duty of scholars to speak openly about innovations and not, by their silence, to allow the further spread of deviations from the true way.

Shāfi'ite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this section we will examine the Shāfi'ite view of *bid'a* during this period as it is set forth in *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā' wa-'l-Nahy 'an al-Ibtidā'* written by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-1505), a work which is in fact one of the most important Shāfi'ite accounts of *bid'a.* Like other scholars, al-Suyūṭī commenced his work by quoting a number of verses from the Koran, some *ḥadīths,* and some Companions' traditions concerning innovations and expressing the need to adhere to the *Sunna.*[146] The passages which he cites are in fact, more or less, the same as those we have presented in the second chapter above.[147] This is followed by a chapter concerning the division of *bida'* into good and bad, using al-Shāfi'ī's statement which was previously cited when discussing the opinions of Abū Shāma.[148] Then he divided evil innovations into two broad categories. The first consisted of credal innovations which were mostly espoused by innovatory groups. These were divided into six main groups further

subdivided into twelve each, making a total of seventy-two innovations. These, however, were not al-Suyūṭī's principal concern and so he abstained from discussing these sects individually. His second category of evil innovations consisted of innovatory actions, which were again subdivided into two groups, following Abū Shāma and al-Ṭurṭūshī. The first of these groups included all those actions which were acknowledged to be either prohibited or undesirable innovations both by the masses and also by the educated classes. The second group included innovatory practices which among some unenlightened classes of people were not thought of as innovations but as permissible forms of worship.[149] In order to demonstrate his categories of *bida'*, al-Suyūṭī drew the following diagram:[150]


What becomes new and innovated in religious matters
Evil innovations which are in contravention of the Sunna
Good innovations which are in agreement with the Sunna
Acts (i.e. ritual and custom)
Credal innovations which lead to mischief (6 x 12 = 72 sects)
Bida' not familiarly known as such to the masses and educated classes
Bida' familiarly known as such to the masses and educated classes
Undesirable
Prohibited

Al-Suyūṭī's account is principally a discussion of innovatory acts not familiarly known as such among some of the less well educated members of society, for example the 'innovations' of looking with admiration at beardless youths, listening to songs, and dancing. He was conscious also of the innovation of venerating certain places such as graves, trees, and stones and to warn people against falling into this practice he cited the following *ḥadīth* narrated by a Companion of the Prophet who said,

> We went out with the Prophet to a place called Ḥunayn and on our way we passed by the unbelievers who had a Christ's-thorn tree (*nabk*) as a place for seclusion (*i'tikāf*) and for hanging their weapons on. Then I said: O Apostle of Allāh, can we have a tree like the unbelievers? The Apostle of Allāh said: Allāh is great! This is what the people of Israel (Banū Isrā'īl) said to Moses: 'Fashion for us a god like unto the gods they have.'[152] I [the Prophet] swear by God who has my soul that you will follow the way of the previous nations.[153]

His awareness of the danger of this innovation seems related to the fact that the veneration of such places might lead to their becoming misused for purposes of intercession and worship.[154] It is clear that in his book al-Suyūṭī added discussion of more ritual innovations than had the previous Shāfi'ite scholars, which was no doubt due to the fact that the era in which he lived had come to witness a proliferation of such innovations, possibly because of Muslims' living in close contact with Coptic Christians in Egypt and because of the conversion of many Mongols and Turks who found difficulty in shedding immediately all their age-old customs.

Al-Suyūṭī was also concerned about the innovation of monasticism and sought to demonstrate that, as a practice, it was contrary to the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad. In this connection he cited a *ḥadīth* narrated by the Companion Anas b. Mālik who reported that

> A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet asking how the Prophet worshipped [Allāh]. When they had been informed about this, they considered their own worship to be insignificant and so they said, "Where are we in relation to the Prophet, for his past and future sins have been forgiven?" Then one of them said, "I will offer prayer throughout the night forever." A second said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from women and will not marry forever." Allāh's Apostle came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allāh, I am more submissive to Allāh and more afraid of Him than you, yet I fast and break my fast, I sleep, and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion is not of mine [not one of my followers]."[155]

In conformity with this tradition, al-Suyūṭī considered castration and abstention from marriage as forms of innovation.[156] This verdict he supported by a *ḥadīth* narrated by Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās who reported, 'Allāh's Apostle forbade 'Uthmān b. Maẓ'ūn abstaining from marrying (and other pleasures) and if he had allowed him, we would have gotten ourselves castrated.'[157] Al-Suyūṭī did not explain the actual nature of this innovation, but it would appear to be a form of ritual innovation as it is related to forms of worship. Al-Suyūṭī's awareness of innovations went beyond those which sprang up within Islamic practice, for he

also discussed the celebration of other religious festivals which had crept into the community. He considered the dangers of imitating other religions' festivals, particularly the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus during the winter, and also the celebration of the new year, and he asserted that the Muslim is not allowed to imitate the Christians, Jews, and unbelievers in general,[158] for Allāh said to His Prophet, 'Then we put thee on the (right) way of religion: so follow thou that (way), and follow not the desires of those who know not.'[159] Moreover, he discussed the innovatory practices mentioned by Abū Shāma and his teacher, al-Ṭurṭūshī, such as the prayer on the first Friday of the month of Rajab and the prayer in the middle of the month of Sha'bān, but he added to the latter practice the burning of a fire on that night. These forms of *bid'a,* al-Suyūṭī believed, were introduced by the Barmakids during the 'Abbāsid period, intending to introduce their own practices imported from their original Mazdaism. Al-Suyūṭī asserted that there was no virtue at all attaching to these foreign practices.[160] It is not surprising that al-Suyūṭī discussed the same innovations that had been mentioned by Abū Shāma and his master, al-Ṭurṭūshī, since he was aware of the work they had already done on the subject and quoted them many times in his own account.[161]

Al-Suyūṭī's last chapter is concerned with a different variety of innovation, that is to say, custom and ritual innovations. These included such practices as engagements prior to marriage, innovations attaching to funerals, to the pilgrimage, and relating to greetings and forms of salutation.[162] Thus,

al-Suyūṭī was deeply concerned about the character of the Muslim community both internally and externally. Internally, he found more innovations than had been spoken of by his predecessors and he sought to warn people against the dangers that lay in them, while externally he was eager to stress the dangers that lay in imitating other religions. During his time the innovations were diverse and their threat was very strong, especially the external influences upon Islam that came from other religions' festivals, particularly the Christians'.

In conclusion, one might say that al-Suyūṭii's account is principally a discussion of ritual innovations which had crept into the body of the Muslim community. So, in his conclusion, he exhorts Muslims to hold fast to the creed of the redeeming group, that is *Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a.* This was, he felt, the most worthwhile recommendation and was in accord with the teachings of Imām al-Shāfi'ī himself. Al-Shāfi'ī's recommendation had centred totally on the beliefs of the redeeming group as he exhorted to 'follow the *Sunna* and avoid innovations and [wilful] desires.'[163] It was possibly on account of these words of al-Shāfi'ī that al-Suyūṭī made the same emphasis in the conclusion to his own work on *bid'a.*

Ḥanbalite Scholars' Attitudes towards the Concept of *Bid'a*

In this section we will explore the position of the Ḥanbalite scholars, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb towards the concept of *bid'a.* Ibn Taymiyya

(667-728/1268-1327) became the inspiration of later scholars as he achieved success in many channels. Most notably, 'his loyalty to the "men of old" (*salaf*) led him to prefer the ideas upheld by the Companions (*ṣaḥāba*) or their early successors to the doctrine taught by the founders of the *madhāhib*."[164] So Ibn Taymiyya campaigned strenuously to bring back his community to the practice of the early generations of Islam. In this respect, he can be accounted a reformer in his time. He also achieved success in reasserting the necessary link between religion and political authority. Thus, he felt religion and the state

> to be indissolubly linked. Without the coercive power (*shawka*) of the state, religion is in danger. Without the discipline of the revealed Law, the state becomes a tyrannical organization. The essential function of the state is to see that justice (*'adl*) prevails, to ordain good (*amr*) and to forbid evil, to bring about, in reality, the reign of unity (*taḥḳīḳ al-tawḥīd*), and to prepare for the coming of a society devoted to the service of God (*'ibāda*).[165]

In addition to these underlying principles that motivated his actions, Ibn Taymiyya fought against all evils whether by his pen, i.e. through his writings, or by his sword, as when he fought against the Tatars and encouraged his own people in the same defence of *dār al-Islām*. These ideals were picked up again later by another Ḥanbalite scholar, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, whose views on *bid'a* we will consider a little later.

We turn now to an examination of those of Ibn Taymiyya's books which were particularly concerned with the concept of *bid'a*, the most important of

which was his *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm wa-Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm.* As the title suggests, the book asserts the necessity of following the right path which is embodied in the Koran and the *Sunna,* and of shunning the ways of those people who are destined for Hell, whether they be Christians, Jews, or adherents of any other religion.

> His most comprehensive statement of dogma on the subject of innovation (*bid'a*), with the implication that all innovation must needs come from non-Islamic sources, the *Iqtiḍā'* spells out that not even the most trifling resemblance must be allowed to exist between Muslims and non-Muslims, that all Muslim life must begin from the point where a perfect dissimilarity with the non-Muslim has been achieved.[166]

His purpose in writing the book was, as he explained in his introduction, to preach to his community against imitating other religions' festivals. He discovered, however, that some of the people found this exhortation very strange because they wanted to retain their habits. It was for this reason, he said, that some of his companions insisted on his writing something concerning this matter that would benefit the people.[167] Memon suggests that if we examine Ibn Taymiyya's account in terms of ideas and themes, it is possible to argue that the work is in fact a collection of his previous writings that appeared in isolated 'pamphlet' form and in legal opinions (*fatwās*).

It would seem that Ibn Taimīya was gradually coming to the idea of integrating most of his earlier pamphlets and *fatwās,* each dealing at a time with a specific form of innovation, into a comprehensive statement about their unorthodox status. The very structure of the book itself affords this

possibility. The first 150 pages of the book are exclusively devoted to the theoretical formulation that the Scriptuaries are a condemned people whose social behaviour, mores, religious life and legends simply cannot be admitted in an essential Islamic state. This formulation then works as the basis on which later practical instances from the Scriptuaries' lives, i.e., innovations that Muslims have succumbed to, are violently discredited.[168]

The main concern of Ibn Taymiyya's *Iqtiḍā'* was the syncretic adoption of non-Islamic festivals. Memon has suggested that there is a similarity of scope and content between the work of Ibn al-Ḥājj and that of Ibn Taymiyya's present work. Both shared a concern about people's behaviour, but Ibn Taymiyya 'was not merely concerned with denouncing the phenomenon itself but was also, more importantly, concerned with providing a theoretical basis for its illegitimacy.'[169] Ibn Taymiyya worried about the problems that sprang from borrowing from other relgions, especially when Muslims came into contact with the Christian Crusaders of Palestine and Syria where he himself lived. He found a warning against participating in other religions' festivals in the words of the Companion 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar who had said, 'Whoever lives in a non-Muslim land, celebrates their Nawrūz festivals, and imitates them until his death will be resurrected with them on the Day of Judgment.'[170] So Ibn Taymiyya was against borrowing from Christains in their celebration of Christmas, against borrowing from Zoroastrians in feasting on the day of Nawrūz, and similarly opposed syncretism from any other religion.[171] In this context he vigorously asserted that Muslims must avoid certain characteristics of the people of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*), in particularly the Christians and the Jews. One of these characteristics

was their lack of interest in propagating God's message of guidance among the people.[172] Ibn Taymiyya therefore asserted that Allāh says, 'And remember God took a covenant from the people of the Book, to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it; but they threw it away behind their backs, and purchased with it some miserable gain! And vile was the bargain they made!'[173] Another of their characteristics, he states, was their exceeding the proper bounds in the veneration of saints, an attitude which had come to be adopted among Sufi orders and which was clearly condemned in the Koran.[174] So he quoted the words of Allāh: 'They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of God...'[175]

Ibn Taymiyya divided festivals into two kinds. The first kind were related to days which are not venerated by the *Sharī'a,* for example the first Thursday and the night of Friday in the month of Rajab. The prayers which are specially offered on this occasion are known as *al-raghā'ib.* Ibn Taymiyya did not discuss this *bid'a* (*al-raghā'ib*) in detail, as Ibn al-Ḥājj had done, but he explained that it had been introduced in the fourth/eleventh century and that it was based upon a fabricated *ḥadīth* supported by the consensus (*ijmā'*) of the scholars. The content of this fabricated *ḥadīth* concerns the virtues attaching to the observance of the fast on that Thursday and the performing of prayers on the night of Friday.[176] Under this heading he also discussed the practice of some Muslims in celebrating the birthday of the Prophet, a practice which arose out of an imitation of the Christian practice of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and

out of Muslims' great love for the Prophet. However, he pointed out, the early generations of Islam had a great love for the Prophet and yet this celebration was not practised by them.[177] Going further, he added, 'Indeed the most complete expression of one's love and reverence of him lies in following and obeying him, in carrying out his commands, upholding his *Sunna* both in inner as well as external life."[178] He also discussed the innovatory festival which venerated the night of the middle of the month of Sha'bān.[179] Ibn Taymiyya's first category of festivals was therefore one concerning time.

His second category of festivals had to do with place, particularly the tombs of the prophets and saints.[180] These festivals, 'more than those of time, are regarded by Ibn Taimīya as having a deleterious influence upon the moral life of a Muslim. Hence he reserves a comparatively deeper and more extensive discussion for them."[181] Furthermore, one might consider this type of festival as credal-related innovations since they affect beliefs and might lead to polytheism (*shirk*). According to Ibn Taymiyya, this type of festival can be further divided into three forms. The first form comprises places which have no standing in the *Sharī'*, such as the shrines of pagan idols which are mentioned in the Koran, as for example when Allāh says, 'Have ye seen Lāt, and 'Uzzā, and another the third (goddess), Manāt?"[182] Ibn Taymiyya explained that al-Lāt was the name of a saintly person whose tomb became venerated by his people who built a fine structure over it in the city of al-Ṭā'if, that al-'Uzza was a deity venerated by the Meccans, and that Manāt was also a deity in Medina.[183] The second and third

forms of festivals attaching to places are, Ibn Taymiyya wrote, those which have standing in the *Sharī'a* but only as places and not as festival centres. These places, he asserted, should not be used for worship or for festivals, because the Prophet specifically warns his people against taking his grave as a festival site.[184] These two forms of 'festivals' Ibn Taymiyya chose to deal with more thoroughly, apparently because of the great confusion which had been caused concerning them by the Sufis. His vigorous attacks on their actions stemmed from his zeal for two principles. The first was that there is no proof of the authenticity of these shrines of saints and messengers, except, that is, for the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad.[185] The second principle was that even if these shrines were authentic tombs and sanctuaries (*mashāhid*), it would be a mistake to

> turn them into festival sites, [and] how much more so if the ascription itself is entirely false. The Prophet severely warned his community not to turn graves into objects of worship and adoration, because the Jews and Christians did so and consequently precipatated their own ruination. Keeping holy a location which is not meant to be kept holy by the *Sharī'a* is worse than hallowing a time which the *Sharī'a* has not hallowed.[186]

Under these headings Ibn Taymiyya discussed unlawful acts such as making a vow to provide illumination for tombs used as places of prayer.[187] It should be noted that there were two separate booklets written by Ibn Taymiyya on the practice of visiting graves, which tended to some extent to overlap with the content of his *Iqtiḍā';* these were entitled respectively *Kitāb al-Ziyāra* and *al-Jawāb al-Bāhir fī Zuwwār al-Maqābir.* The first of these, *Kitāb*

al-Ziyāra, was written in response to some questions concerning the visiting of graves. In this booklet Ibn Taymiyya demonstrated what was to be accounted a lawful visit (*al-ziyāra al-shar'iyya*) and what was to be accounted an innovative visit (*al-ziyāra al-bid'iyya*). The lawful visit, he reasoned, was one the purpose of which was, in visiting the grave of the Prophet or any other common grave, to salute the deceased, pray for him, and then to leave. Furthermore, if the visitant should desire to pray on his own account, he should face the *qibla* as scholars have stated.[188] The innovatory visit, he asserted, was one the purpose of which was, in visiting the grave, to make intercession on one's own behalf.[189] In his second booklet, *al-Jawāb al-Bāhir fī Zuwwār al-Maqābir,* Ibn Taymiyya attacked the idea of setting out on a journey to any grave, but especially to the grave of the Prophet and he explained that this innovation only arose after the passing of the first three generations of Islam.[190] He reported that

> a man asked Mālik about another person who had taken an oath to set out on a journey to visit the Prophet's grave. Mālik told him that if the man had wanted to visit the mosque, it was permissible, but that if he had wanted to go to the grave, he must not do so.[191]

In support of this exclusion of setting out on a journey the intention of which was to visit a grave, Ibn Taymiyya stated that, according to the tradition, the *Sharī'a* only accepts the setting out on a journey to three specified mosques, i.e. the Great Mosque of Mecca, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and Al-Aqṣā Mosque.[192]

Another significant subject discussed by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Iqtiḍā'* was that of intercession.[193] On account of certain practices of the Sufis, this had become an especial problem during Ibn Taymiyya's time. Ibn Taymiyya referred, in this connection, to a tradition about a blind man who came to the Prophet Muḥammad requesting him to intercede for him that he might regain his sight, in response to which the Prophet had advised him to implore God in the Prophet's name. Disallowing that this tradition permits appeals to human intercessors with God, Ibn Taymiyya

> concludes that all it really demonstrates is that only the living can be applied [to] for intercession and this includes also the Prophet. When living he was sought for intercession and will be again after the resurrection, for then he would again be living. But in the period between his death and ultimate resurrection he can be the object of one's blessings and salutations, not his agency towards gaining divine access and his intercessor.[194]

Ibn Taymiyya was aware of the problem of veneration in general and of intercession in particular, for he realized that it was a path that might easily lead to polytheism (*shirk*). As I Goldziher has pointed out, the problem of

> the veneration of such beings, by which often angels or even idols are meant, called *shufa'ā'* (sing. *shafī'*) by those who honour them, is sharply condemned in the Koran in many passages (Sūra 10: 19; 13: 17, 18; 39: 44, etc.) and is branded as *shirk*.[195]

This dilemma was very serious and posed a grave danger during Ibn Taymiyya's time, as well as later, as we will see when we come to discuss the teaching of

Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Goldziher suggested that the belief in the sanctity of some graves 'reaches its peak in the idea of the merit of pilgrimages to them (*ziyāra*), or even that the *ziyāra* to the graves of saints could replace the *ḥajj*.'[196] For this reason Ibn Taymiyya concluded his discussion in his *Iqtiḍā'* by stating the necessity of wholehearted belief in the Lordship (*rubūbiyya*) and Divinity (*ulūhiyya*) of God, and in His Names and Attributes (*al-asmā' wa-'l-ṣifāt*).[197]

Indeed, in the context of his discussion of festivals, whether of times or places, Ibn Taymiyya, like al-Shāṭibī, states a very significant definition of the nature of both worship and customs (*'ādāt*), for he said, 'The basis of worship is that nothing is permissible except what Allāh and His Prophet have prescribed for us, whereas the basis of customs is that all is permissible except what Allāh and His Prophet have forbidden us.'[198] Possibly his purpose in stating these two definitions in the midst of his discussion of festivals was to strengthen his position against the imitation of other religions' festivals, for Islamic law is opposed to such imitation. These definitions also demonstrate the flexibility of the *Sharī'a* in the matter of customs (*'ādāt*), although it does not permit an exceeding of limits such as was characteristic of the Muslim community in Ibn Taymiyya's time when many innovations appeared in different shapes, such as the veneration of tombs, the worship of saints, and imitations of other religions.

Another issue to be discussed here is Ibn Taymiyya's position with

regard to the division of *bida'* into good and bad. He was strongly opposed to this device and refuted the evidence brought by those who favoured the division (mainly Shāfi'ites and a few others). As we have seen, one of the most important pieces of evidence brought by the Shāfi'ites was the *athar* which reported the statement of the Caliph 'Umar concerning the *tarāwīḥ* prayers when he gathered the people under one leader and said, 'This is an excellent *bid'a!*'[199] The Shāfi'ites and some others viewed this statement as proof that *bida'* might be either good or bad. However, Ibn Taymiyya stated that the performing of *tarāwīḥ* prayers in congregation is considered by the *Sharī'a* to be *Sunna* rather than an innovation. This is because the Prophet had performed them during a few nights at the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān.[200] Going further, Ibn Taymiyya stated,

> 'Umar's definition of the practice as a good innovation is moreover a lexical and not a *shar'ī* definition. Innovation in the lexical sense applies to anything which is done for the first time without precedence, whilst in the *shar'ī* sense it stands for any act which cannot be supported with a *shar'ī* argument.[201]

Furthermore, he went on,

> Should we attempt to approve any legal matter on the basis of 'Umar's saying, an opponent might say that the words of the Companions do not imply approval. However, the people who accept the sayings of the Companions [indicating himself] as implying approval would not approve a saying of the Companions when it contradicts the *Sunna*. So in both ways 'Umar's statement would not stand against the *ḥadīth*.[202]

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyya was plainly opposed to the notion of dividing *bida'* into

good and bad.

As we have noted earlier, Ibn Taymiyya opposed the acts of some Sufis in their veneration of the saints. However, he did respect and admire the early ascetics and Sufis who followed the Koran and the *Sunna.*[203] Ibn Taymiyya 'never condemned Ṣūfism in itself, but only that which he considered to be, in the case of too many Ṣufīs, inadmissible deviations in doctrine, ritual or morals, such as monism (*wuḥdat al-wudjūd*), antinomianism (*ibāḥa*) or esotericism (*ghuluww*).'[204] So he condemned esotericism which he thought of as one of the influences which diverted people from the *Sunna,*[205] and to confirm his view he reported a *ḥadīth* on the matter. In this *ḥadīth,* the Prophet was reported to have said, 'Avoid esotericism (*ghuluww*) in religion, because esotericism is what destroyed the people before you.'[207] In this context, Ibn Taymiyya warned people not to venerate or to ascribe peculiar qualities to Sufi leaders such as Shaykh 'Adī (d. 557/1161) and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922). He added that such excessive veneration was neither acceptable for the Caliph 'Alī nor for the Prophet Jesus.[208]

Another battle front that occupied Ibn Taymiyya was the debate with such innovatory groups as the Rāfiḍites, Jahmites, Khārijites, Qadarites, and Mu'tazilites. In this context he sought to explain the tradition foretelling the division of the Islamic community into seventy-two sects and a seventy-third which follows the Koran, the *Sunna,* and the three earliest generations of Muslims.[209] In his book *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā,* Ibn Taymiyya pays the greatest

attention to the Rāfiḍites who, in his estimation, were the most evil of innovators and therefore worthy to be fought against by Muslim people. They despised true Muslims (Sunnites) and particularly the three caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān.[210] They also regarded as infidels anyone opposed to their innovations such as wiping of the feet in ablutions instead of washing them and their rejection of the practice of wiping clean the footwear instead of the feet in inclement weather.[211] He asserted, 'We [Muslims] ought to take a straight (*i'tidāl*) position regarding matters concerning the Companions.'[212] By this straight position he meant that one must love the Companions and respect them without any excess (*ghuluww*). He stated that Allāh praises the Companions in the Koran by saying, 'Muḥammad is the Apostle of God; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other.'[213] Again, he added, Allāh also said, 'God's good pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory.'[214] Ibn Taymiyya also asserted that one should abstain from entering into the conflict between the Companions over the caliphate, knowing that some of what has been reported about this conflict is false. The Companions, he stated, were the best generation of mankind.[215] So he cited the tradition: 'It was asked from Allah's Apostle, who amongst the people were the best. He said: (people) of my generation, then those next to them, then those next to them...'[216]

In conclusion, therefore, of this summary of the views expressed by Ibn

Taymiyya, it is clear that he was extremely forthright and comprehensive in his attacks against both ritual and credal innovations. This was because he viewed *bidʿa* as a wide concept. He said, 'anything that is not enjoined in the Koran and fails to show precedence in the *Sunna* of the Prophet or in the behaviour of the *Salaf* is an innovation and must be censured,' to which Memon affixed the comment, 'Most of his writings show a preoccupation in varying degrees of intensity with the theme of innovation.'[217] His achievement, like that of al-Shāṭibī, sprang from his provision of a theoretical basis for the illegitimacy of innovations.[218] Overall, Ibn Taymiyya achieved the

> distinction that he opposed by word and deed almost every aspect of religion in the Mamluk Empire. Whether it be the visitation of holy places, the erection of mausolea, the extreme beliefs and practices of Sufis, Muslim imitation of Christian rites, lenient treatment of Copts, the peril posed to Islam by the Mongols, the toleration of Shīʿism, or, most importantly, deviations from Qur'anic and traditional Islam, Ibn Taymiyya was militantly opposed and did not hesitate to articulate his views.[219]

We are left in this section with the task of examining the views expressed concerning *bidʿa* of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1115-1206/1703-1792), who may be considered a perpetuator of the work of Ibn Taymiyya. As has been remarked by Sheikh Safiullah, Ibn Taymiyya's works 'played an important role in the life of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, giving him the courage to lead a revivalist movement,'[220] and indeed it is true that Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb shared the same attitude toward God, the Koran, and

the *Sunna*. Like Ibn Taymiyya before him, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb,

> in order to restore Islam to the golden age of the Prophet and his Companions... preached the return to the two 'sole' sources of revelation: the Qur'ān and the early *Sunna*. He condemned all deviations from the doctrines of the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet as polytheism (*shirk*) and sinful innovation.[221]

It is not surprising that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb reiterated the ideas concerning fundamental issues which had been expressed before him by Ibn Taymiyya since he was directly influenced by the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and both reformists belonged to the Ḥanbalite school of jurisprudence. A third motivating factor that seems to have inspired both of them was a deeply felt concern over the declining standards of Muslim nations. In addition, they were both faced with similar problems in terms of the veneration of saints, tombs, and shrines. As Isma'il Faruqi (the translator of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*) remarked, the Muslim *umma* throughout the world

> had witnessed a period of decline once before, prior to its march, under Ottoman leadership, against Byzantium, Russia and the rest of Europe in the 10th AH/16th AC century. Prior to that time, it was pressed into withdrawal from Spain and attacked in its heartland by Crusaders. It had suffered wave after wave of invasion by Mongols and Tatars from Central Asia.[222]

Both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb diagnozed the malaise and prescribed the cure in terms of religious reform.[223] As Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb looked around him in his native region of Najd, the situation he found there was

one characterized by corruption and innovation. In the words of W.F. Smalley, the 'superstitions and practices of other religions had crept into the lives of thinking Moslems everywhere."[224]

We will now proceed to explore the attitude of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb toward innovations. While he did not compose any discrete work on the subject of *bidʿa,* his thoughts on the subject are to be found throughout his writings, in particular in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and in his correspondence (*Rasā'il*). However, before turning specifically to *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* it will be instructive to examine his position with regard to the division of *bidaʿ*. He followed the Ḥanbalite line of thought that *bidʿa* is always and only evil, asserting, for example, 'I believe that any innovation in religion is evil."[225] He refuted the people in favour of the division of *bidaʿ* into good and bad by citing the tradition of the Prophet in which he said, '...Every innovation is an error..."[226] Commenting, he wrote to his correspondent, 'It is very strange that the Prophet asserts that every *bidʿa* is an error while you say innovation can be good."[227] Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was principally concerned with those innovations, such as the veneration of certain trees or graves and the slaughtering of animals in other names than that of Allāh, which had both credal and ritual dimensions. As credal innovations, they posed a major threat to the fundamental belief in monotheism (*tawḥīd*). *Tawḥīd,* Faruqi wrote,

> is the realization that God is one, absolutely unique and transcendant, that He alone is the Creator and Master of creation. He alone is the ultimate cause of

> all that is, as well as the ultimate end of all that was, is or will be. Only He, therefore, is worthy of adoration and worship; for only He is God...[228]

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb cited the Koranic verse in which Allāh says, 'I have only created jinns and men, that they may serve Me.'[229] As ritual innovations, they brought in practices which had no authorization, regardless of their implications.

Isma'il Faruqi writes that

> on its pages, the principle of tawḥīd is presented and analyzed. Since this book was meant to be an instrument for reform, the author was more concerned to expose the misunderstandings and misapplications of the principle than to project its desirable consequences. For him, as for the believing Muslim in general, it is unquestionable that felicity in this world as well as in the next belongs to the faithful who fulfill the divine imperatives.[230]

At the commencement of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb explains the meaning of *tawḥīd,* the danger of polytheism (*shirk*), and the reward of entering paradise acquitted of his sins that is offered to him who lives in accordance with the doctrine of *tawḥīd.*[231] In his sixth chapter he states that the donning of the Sufi garment, or the wearing of a chain as a prophylactic or to achieve a cure for some affliction are all species of *shirk,* and in confirmation of this he cites the Koranic verse:

> If indeed thou ask them who it is that created the heavens and the earth, they would be sure to say, "God". Say: "See ye then? The things that ye invoke besides God, - can they, if God wills some Penalty for me, remove His

> Penalty? - For me, can they keep back His Grace?" Say: "Sufficient is God for me! In Him trust those who put their trust."[232]

In addition, he cited a number of *ḥadīths* to the same effect, one of which stated,

> 'Imrān ibn Ḥusayn related that the Prophet once saw a man carrying a brass chain. When he asked about it, the man replied that he needed it to overcome the weakness of old age. The Prophet commanded him to remove it, saying: "It can only add to your weakness. Should death overtake you while you are wearing it, you would never succeed."[233]

Thus he appealed to the Koran and to Prophetic Tradition in order to demonstrate 'the gravity of the offence of wearing chains and garments as amulets, charms and talismans.'[234]

Another practice which he witnessed in Najd was the veneration of special trees or stones,[235] and in opposition to this custom he related that al-Tirmidhī reported that Abū Wāqid al-Laythī had said,

> We went out with the Prophet of Allah on a campaign against Ḥunayn, while we had barely left our old paganism for Islam. It was the practice of unbelievers to hang their arms and armor on a tree called Dhāt Anwāṭ. When we passed by a similar tree, we asked the Prophet: 'Would not you establish for us another Dhāt Anwāṭ, just as they have one?' The Prophet answered: 'Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)! You have now spoken exactly like Banū Isrā'īl did to Mūsā: "Make unto us a god just as their gods."[236] Certainly you are an ignorant people. Must you follow exactly the same patterns as those that went before you?'[237]

This veneration of trees, graves, and stones was a major problem throughout all Muslim territory and especially in Najd where, it was reported, some people venerated the grave of Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb, a tree known as al-Ṭarfiyya, and the graves of the saints. People came to these places for intercession, to seek a blessing (*tabarruk*), or to make vows.[238] Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb opposed these innovations and his position was strengthened when he travelled from Ḥuraymilā to al-'Uyayna where he came under the protection of the governor of al-'Uyayna, 'Uthmān b. Mu'ammar. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb grew very active as an iconoclast; he destroyed the dome erected over the grave of Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb and cut down the sacred trees.[239] As Amin Rihani described his actions, he 'took the axe in his own hand and felled a certain tree called Abu Dajjanah, to whom "the maiden prayed for a groom; and the barren wife, for a seed to bloom; and the widow for some male to lighten her doom." '[240]

Also, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb opposed any slaughter for other than Allāh's sake, supporting his view by appeal to two Koranic verses and two *ḥadīth*s.[241] Thus, he asserted, Allāh says, 'Say: "Truly, my partner and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for God, the Cherisher of the Worlds: no partner hath He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His Will.["][242] Also, he said, Muslim related from 'Alī the following: 'The Prophet of Allah gave me four judgments: Abomination to him who slaughters in the name of anyone other than Allah!...'[243] Going further, like Ibn Taymiyya before him, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb declared in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* that the cause of

unbelief is exaggeration of the worth of the righteous.[244] Again he cited the words of Allāh in the Koran: 'O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of God aught but the truth.'[245] Also, he said, it is reported that the Prophet said, 'Do not exaggerate (in religious matters). Your predecessors perished on account of their exaggeration.'[246] This chapter was linked with another one concerning how an exaggerated respect for the graves of saints transforms them into idolatrous shrines. With this in view, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb quoted Mālik, who reported that the Prophet said, 'O lord! May my grave never become an object of worship. Allah's fury is directed to those who take their saints' graves for mosques.'[247] Thus, the veneration of the saints was a major problem for both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb who both campaigned to revive 'the old Ḥanbalite opposition against the cult of the graves.'[248]

On account of his zeal against the excessive veneration of holy men, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers became accused of hating the Prophet and the saints, an accusation which had also been levelled against Ibn Taymiyya, as well as some reforming scholars of India.[249] The accusation sprang from the fact that he was opposed to the idea of setting out on a pilgrimage to the Prophet's grave or those of other saints and that he accounted such journeys 'an innovation, and not a practice of the Companions of the Prophet's immediate followers [*sic*], and forbidden by the Prophet himself. This view was held by many earlier *Ulema,* long before Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab and even Ibn Taymiya.'[250] The accusation also had to do with the fact that the Wahhābīs, as they became called,

forbid Moslems to face the tomb of the Prophet at prayer, to kneel at the Prophet's or any other tomb, to rub themselves against any tomb or to roll themselves on the ground near it. They also forbid prayer for help at any of the tombs although in other Moslem countries this is a frequent custom. They have also removed all domes and monuments from the tombs, and cancelled all endowments earmarked for them.[251]

However, the fact is that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers love and honour the Prophet, yet Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb

> deprecates the exaggeration of these sentiments; he also strongly resists later qualifications of this attitude of whatever kind from whatever source. True love of the Prophet, he says, should consist first and foremost of strict observation of his precepts and the regulation of life.[252]

Oddly enough, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's enemies also accused him of innovation. He describes his ordeal in one of his letters, saying,

> We have undergone a trial that you have heard about. The reason behind this trial is that we have destroyed buildings erected over the graves of righteous people in our land. The public thought that this was a serious offence because they believed our action was intended to disgrace these righteous people.[253]

On account of this, he wrote, people viewed him as an innovator and not a true follower of the Ḥanbalite school, but in reply he threw out the challenge:

> If you believe it is not right to destroy buildings erected over graves, a custom practised by people in many countries, you have at hand in Mecca the books

of the Ḥanbalites, such as *al-Iqnā'*, *Ghāyat al-Muntaha*, and *al-Inṣāf*, on which contemporary scholars rely and which are similar to *al-Tuḥfa* and *al-Nihāya* of the Shāfi'ites. These books state in the chapters on funerals that buildings over graves should be eliminated, according to the saying of the Prophet found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and reported by 'Alī, that the Prophet sent him to destroy the prominent graves, which he did.[254]

Another front on which Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb battled was the rejection of the practice of seeking intercession from deceased persons, whether the Prophet or a saint. It had been reported that when the people experienced a drought in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, they went to al-'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle, who was then alive, requesting that he might intercede for them, but they did not go to the Prophet's grave.[255] However, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, like other Sunnites, did believe in the Prophet's intercession with God on the Day of Judgment. He explained that the Prophet Muḥammad is the first of rank among men in approaching God and in making intercession, an intercession which is only denied by those innovators who have gone astray. This intercession, he stated, would be by the permission of God,[256] for Allāh says, 'And they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable...,'[257] and again, 'Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth?'[258] Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb commented, 'God accepts only monotheists and pagans have no share in intercession,'[259] which, he said, is because Allāh says, 'Then will no intercession of (any) intercessors profit them.'[260] Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was evidently concerned to clarify the Sunnite position on the subject of intercession. In another of his letters, he stated that all

of the following practices, which are related to intercession, are to be rejected. He wrote, 'As for asking saints and Prophets to intercede after their death, giving glory to their graves by building domes over them, praying thereat, dedicating servants for them and sacrificing to them are innovations.'[261]

Another important issue for Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was the correct attitude for orthodox Muslims, i.e. Sunnites, towards innovatory groups. Thus, he asserted, the redeeming group (*Ahl al-Sunna*) is the golden mean between over-emphasis on human will (the Qadarites) and over-emphasis on divine sovereignty (the Jabrites), it is the golden mean between the Murji'ites and the Khārijities, and the golden mean between the two sides in the conflict over the Companions of the Prophet (the Rāfiḍites and the Khārijites).[262] He went on to state that the best person in the Islamic *umma* after the Prophet is Abū Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, and then 'Alī, followed by the others who have been granted access to paradise, then the warriors of Badr, then 'the people of the tree' who accepted the Prophet's message and took the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) to him, followed by the rest of the Prophet's Companions.[263] He further asserted, 'I am loyal to the Companions of the Prophet, mention their merits, ask mercy and forgiveness for them, never talk about their differences and conflicts, and believe in their superiority,'[264] an attitude in confirmation of which he cited the Koranic verse:

> And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour (or

> sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."[265]

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb seems to have been mainly concerned with the Rāfiḍites, possibly because he viewed them as the first people guilty of introducing *shirk* among the Islamic *umma*. Indeed, he stated explicitly, 'The first people to have introduced polytheism among this nation are the accursed Rāfiḍites who claim that 'Alī and others are able to help them in gratifying their needs.'[266] His disgust for the Rāfiḍites might also have sprung from their excessive devotion to 'Alī and his descendants. Moreover, he complained, they venerate the grave of 'Alī and turn it into an idolatrous shrine, as also they do with the grave of Ḥusayn.[267] It was probably on account of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's zeal to banish these innovations relating to the the excessive veneration of saints and their intercessory cults tending toward polytheism, that he paid such particular attention to the Rāfiḍites.

Another group who contributed to the problem of the veneration of saints was that of the Sufis. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb directed his criticism against them saying, 'Many people such as the son of Shamsān and the son of Idrīs [contemporary Sufi leaders] are order people to sacrifice for their sakes and to seek their assistance as if they were equals with God, as well as Satan's poor people who pretend to be followers of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir, who is innocent as is 'Alī in respect of the Rāfiḍites.'[268] In addition, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb directed his attention to the dialectical science of theology (*'ilm al-kalām*). To a

correspondent he wrote that it must be considered an innovation and that theologians (*mutakallimūn*) are innovators, since they depend very heavily on their reasoning rather than on revelation.[269]

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was extremely concerned with both credal and ritual innovations which he saw as posing a severe threat to the Islamic community, especially as the people were at risk of being entrapped by polytheism. The Wahhābīs, under the influence of their leader, forbade use of the rosary (*subḥa*),[270] considering it to be an innovation.[271] They also succeeded in fighting against other innovations which seemed to be less harmful such as

> the practice of congregating to listen to the life of the Prophet in the belief that this brings the hearers nearer to God, ...Other Moslems have introduced such innovations as for women to follow a funeral to the grave, ...Annual celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet or other saintly men, holding special *zikr* meetings and, as certain dervishes do, dancing and playing the flute at meetings of this kind. All these things are forbidden according to Islam, and when the Wahhabis occupied the Hejaz, they prohibited them there.[272]

To conclude this part, we may say that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers succeeded in fighting against all innovations in their own territory. This was because Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb had sufficient power to enable him to demolish the practices of innovators. As a summary statement of the whole affair, I. Goldziher wrote, 'One of the most remarkable theological and military

movements in the history of the Arab people came into being in modern times in Central Arabia under the leadership of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.[273] The Wahhābīs also succeeded in spreading their ideals beyond their own territory so that, for instance, they became the inspiration of such movements as that of the Farā'iḍites in Eastern Bengal founded by Ḥājjī Sharī'at Allāh (1764–1860),[274] and the Salafiyya movement in Egypt led by Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rāshid Riḍā.[275] In this respect it is instructive to note that one of the factors which enabled the Wahhābīs to spread their ideals was the conflict raging on the political arena between Arabia and Egypt.

> The war with Egypt brought the Wahhabis into the open. Finally, in the present century, with the discovery of oil in 1938 and the successes of Ibn Sa'ūd in the diplomatic fields, Arabia and Wahhābism were once again brought into the focus of world affairs.[276]

* * *

Having examined in this section the contributions made to an understanding of the concept of *bid'a* by famous scholars of the four major schools of jurisprudence during this final period between the seventh and twelfth centuries A.H., we must conclude that their discussions were significant in character. The period witnessed a great variety of leading scholars, some of whom were concerned with the development of theoretical aspects of *bid'a,* such as al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Taymiyya, while others directed their energies into the

external battle against innovation, such as Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Usuman dan Fodio who succeeded in establishing a theocratic state. Yet they also contributed by their writings and preaching to the development of the discussion of *bid'a*. This period also witnessed the deep concern, felt by Ibn al-Ḥājj and al-Turkumānī, over the mundane behaviour of Islamic people and the need for change that they saw in divesting society of evil conduct and innovatory practices.

Another characteristic of this period was the wholehearted rejection and refutation of the division of *bida'* into good and bad practices, or into the five categories of legal valuation. This rejection was most comprehensively expressed by the Mālikite scholar al-Shāṭibī and the Ḥanbalite scholar Ibn Taymiyya. In this period, the number and types of innovation analysed also increased rapidly. This was due, first, to the massive conversion of some Mongol dynasties and Turkish tribes who persisted in retaining their customary practices. It was due also to the close contact between Muslims and other religious communities, especially during the period of the Crusades. As we have seen, scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya and al-Turkumānī stood very firmly against these syncretic practices and innovations.

Above all, this period is distinguished by the unique contribution given to the developing discussion of the concept of *bid'a,* particularly by the scholars who lived around the fourteenth century A.D., such as al-Shāṭibī, Ibn Taymiyya, al-Turkumānī, and Ibn al-Ḥājj. This may have been due, as Mas'ud suggests, to

the relative stability of the fourteenth century compared to the century that had preceded it. 'The fourteenth century was,' he wrote,

> a period of rest for the Muslim world after the turmoils of the thirteenth century. Two major Mongol dynasties, the Ilkhanis and the Golden Horde had been converted to Islam. The Mamlūks who had withstood the Mongol invasion had stabilized their rule in the fertile crescent and in Egypt. In North Africa as well, conditions were rather stable.[277]

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. For more information about the Mamluks, see D.P. Little, "Religion under the Mamluks", *Muslim World,* LXXIII (1983) 165–181.

2. *Ibid.,* 176.

3. *Ibid.,* 177.

4. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 1.

5. *Ibid.,* 497. This information is provided by the transcriber of al-Turkumānī's book.

6. *Ibid.,* 3.

7. Koran, 35 (Fāṭir): 10, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 3.

8. Al-Turkumānī, *loc. cit.*

9. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", *JESHO,* VII (1964) 191.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.,* 196.

12. *Ibid.,* 191.

13. See al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 9–20.

14. *Ibid.,* 4–6.

15. Koran, 3 (Āl ʿImrān): 104, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 4.

16. Koran, 22 (al-Ḥajj): 41, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 122.

17. See al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 56–58, 70.

18. Koran, 59 (al-Ḥashr): 21, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 70.

19. See al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 70–72.

20. Cl. Cahen, art. "Futuwwa", *EI*², where further information may be found on the subject.

21. *Ibid.*

22. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", 192.

23. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 113.

24. *Ibid.*, 113 f.

25. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", 192.

26. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 121 f.

27. Koran, 3 (Āl ʿImrān): 110, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 122.

28. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 125-7.

29. *Ibid.*, 134.

30. For more information on the Qalandariyya dervish order, see F. Babinger, art. "Ḳalandarīya", *SEI*.

31. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 191.

32. *Ibid.*, 266. As Labib has noted (see following note), there is no further information about this group in al-Turkumānī's work.

33. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", 193. See also al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 266 f.

34. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 270.

35. *Ibid.*, 271.

36. Koran, 8 (al-Anfāl): 38, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 271.

37. Koran, 39 (al-Zumar): 53, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, 271.

38. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", 193. Al-Turkumānī cited many Sufis'

sayings, like those of Ibrāhīm b. al-Adham and Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya. See *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 403–438.

39. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 138.

40. *Ibid.*, 149 f.

41. *Ibid.*, 97–100.

42. *Ibid.*, 170–2.

43. *Ibid.*, 173 f.

44. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bid'a*", 194. See also al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 218 f.

45. See al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 287.

46. Koran, 5 (al-Mā'ida): 54, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 284.

47. Al-Turkumānī erroneously ascribes the Nawrūz to Christians while it is, of course, a festival of the Mazdains. Cf. Labib's note in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 299.

48. *Ibid.*, 293.

49. *Ibid.*, 293 f.

50. Koran, 6 (al-An'ām): 141, cited in al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 294.

51. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 299–302.

52. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bid'a*", 193. See also al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 297 f., 300.

53. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 302 f.

54. *Ibid.*, 311.

55. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bid'a*", 194. See also al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb*

al-Luma', 311 f.

56. Al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-Luma'*, 452–472.

57. *Ibid.*, 482–4.

58. *Ibid.*, 486–8.

59. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bid'a*", 191.

60. *Al-Madkhal* (n.pl., Dār al-Fikr, 1981) I, 6.

61. *Ibid.*, 216 f.

62. *Ibid.*, 227.

63. *Ibid.*, 241.

64. *Ibid.*, 281–9.

65. *Ibid.*, 289–291.

66. *Ibid.*, 292–7. See also al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith*, 120 f.

67. *Ibid.*, 299–313.

68. See *ibid.*, II, 2–32.

69. See *ibid.*, 2 f., 139–143.

70. *Ibid.*, 2–11.

71. *Ibid.*, 46–59.

72. *Ibid.*, 203–218.

73. *Ibid.*, IV, 248–282.

74. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bid'a*", 196.

75. J.C. Vadet, art. "Ibn al-Ḥādjdj", *EI*².

76. *Ibid.*

77. For further information on this subject, see Ibn al-Ukhūwa, *Ma'ālim al-Qurba*

fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisba, ed. with an abstract of contents, glossary and indices by R. Levy (Cambridge & London, C.U.P. & Luzac, 1938).

78. Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal,* IV, 307 f.

79. *Ibid.,* I, 79.

80. *Ibid.,* II, 227.

81. *Ibid.,* IV, 308.

82. Al-Nawawī, *Forty Hadith,* 110. Ibn al-Ḥājj did not cite this *ḥadīth* although he did hint at the three stages mentioned in it (*al-Madkhal,* I, 81).

83. Koran, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 22, cited in Ibn al-Ḥājj, *loc. cit.*

84. S. Labib, "The Problem of *Bidʿa*", 196.

85. See above, p.57-71.

86. Koran, 3 (Āl ʿImrān): 106, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʿtiṣām,* I, 56.

87. Al-Shāṭibī, *loc. cit.*

88. *Ibid.,* 90.

89. *Ibid.,* 82, cited in Masʿud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 300.

90. Masʿud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 101.

91. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʿtiṣām,* 9, cited in Masʿud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 101 f.

92. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʿtiṣām,* 191 f.

93. *Ibid.,* 286.

94. *Ibid.,* 232, cited in Masʿud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 303.

95. Koran, 57 (al-Ḥadīd): 27, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-Iʿtiṣām,* I, 287. In this verse we have used the translation of Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Gibraltar, Dār al-Andalus, 1980).

96. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* 287–290.

97. *Ibid.,* 171 f.

98. *Ibid.,* II, 36 f.

99. *Ibid.,* 65–71.

100. *Ibid.,* 67, cited in Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 304.

101. Mas'ud, *loc. cit.*

102. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* I, 36–8.

103. *Ibid.,* 37.

104. *Ibid.,* 39–41.

105. *Ibid.,* 41 f.

106. *Ibid.,* II, 111–5.

107. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt,* II, 341 f., cited in Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 301.

108. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 111 f.

109. Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 302.

110. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 176.

111. Koran, 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 7, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 179.

112. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 180.

113. Koran, 43 (al-Zukhruf): 23, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *loc. cit.*

114. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* II, 332. See also al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī,* V, no. 2640 f.

115. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 189–198.

116. *Ibid.,* 221.

117. Koran, 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 105, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 231.

118. Koran, 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 7, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 233.

119. Koran, 28 (al-Qaṣaṣ): 50, cited in al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 235.

120. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* II, 231-5.

121. *Ibid.,* 9-11, cited in Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 104.

122. Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 104 f.

123. *Ibid.,* 112.

124. J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law,* repr. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964) 73.

125. David S. Powers, *Fatwas as Sources for Legal and Social History:a Dispute over Endowment Revenues from Fourteenth-Century Fez,* unpublished typescript (Cornell University) 3.

126. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Wansharīsī, *al-Mi'yar al-Mu'*rib *wa-'l-Jāmi' al-Mughrib 'an Fatāwā 'Ulamā' Ifrīqiyā wa-'l-Andalus wa-'l-Maghrib* (Rabat, Wizārat al-Awqāf, 1981) II, 451 f.

127. *Ibid.,* 482.

128. *Ibid.,* 461.

129. Mahmud Brelvi, *Islam in Africa* (Lahore, Inst. of Islamic Culture, 1964) 348.

130. M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century", *BSOAS,* XXV (1962) 592.

131. For further reading about his experience as a Sufi, see Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth* (New York & Oxford, O.U.P., 1973).

132. H.A.S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* (London, O.U.P., 1967) 27.

133. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform", 592.

134. *Ibid.*, 593.

135. *Ibid.*, 596.

136. Usuman dan Fodio, *Iḥyā' al-Sunna wa-Ikhmād al-Biď'a* (Sokoto, al-Ḥājj Tān Āghī Ṭābir, n.d.) 7.

137. *Ibid.*, 39.

138. *Ibid.*, 16.

139. *Ibid.*, 19.

140. *Ibid.*, 23–26.

141. I.A.I. Balogun, "Features of *Iḥyā al-Sunna*", 15, 23.

142. Usuman dan Fodio, *Iḥyā' al-Sunna*, 39 f.

143. *Ibid.*, 245.

144. Balogun, "Features of *Iḥyā' al-Sunna*", 19.

145. Usuman dan Fodio, *Iḥyā' al-Sunna*, 250 f.

146. See *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā' wa-'l-Nahy 'an al-Ibtidā'*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Āshūr (Cairo, Maktabat al-Qur'ān, n.d.) 17–28.

147. See above p.57–71.

148. See p.174 f.

149. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 37–40.

150. *Ibid.*, 41.

151. See *ibid.*, 45–47.

152. Koran, 7 (al-A'rāf): 138, cited in al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 53.

153. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, V, 218, cited in al-Suyūṭī, *loc. cit.*

154. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 33-54.

155. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VII, 8, cited in al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 102.

156. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 101 f.

157. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VII, 8, cited in al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 101.

158. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 67-69.

159. Koran, 45 (al-Jāthiyya): 18, cited in al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 69.

160. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-'l-Ittibā'*, 77-82.

161. See *ibid.*, 54 f.

162. *Ibid.*, 119-129.

163. *Ibid.*, 152 f.

164. H. Laoust, art. "Ibn Taimīya", *EI*².

165. *Ibid.* For further information on the problems that Ibn Taymiyya faced from other scholars and from rulers, see D.P. Litle, "The Historical and Historiographical Significance of the Detention of Ibn Taimiyya", *IJMES*, IV (1973) 311-327; Qamaruddin Khan, *The Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya* (Islamabad, Islamic Rsearch Institute, 1975).

166. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 12 f., cited in Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 78.

167. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 1.

168. Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 81.

169. *Ibid.*, 6.

170. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 200.

171. See *ibid.*, 213 f., 226, 266.

172. *Ibid.*, 6 f.

173. Koran, 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 187, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 7.

174. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 9.

175. Koran, 9 (al-Tawba): 31, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *loc. cit.*

176. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 292 f.

177. *Ibid.*, 294 f.

178. *Ibid.*, 295, cited in Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 243.

179. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 302 f.

180. *Ibid.*, 312.

181. Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 13.

182. Koran, 53 (al-Najm): 19 f., cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 313.

183. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 313 f.

184. See *Ibid.*, 312, 321.

185. See *ibid.*, 316–9.

186. *Ibid.*, 318, cited in Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 14 f.

187. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 329–338.

188. Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Ziyāra*, ed. Sayf al-Dīn al-Kātib (Beirut, Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1980) 13.

189. *Ibid.*, 14.

190. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-Bāhir fī Zuwwār al-Maqābir*, ed. Sulaymān al-Ṣāni' & 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yamanī, 4th ed. (Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Salafiyya, 1980) 59; *idem*, *Kitāb al-Ziyāra*, 15 f.

191. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-Bāhir*, 57 f.

192. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 430.

193. See *ibid.*, 416 f. For further discussion, see also *idem*, *Qā'ida Jalīla fī al-Tawassul wa-'l-Wasīla*, ed. al-Sayyid al-Jamīlī (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1985).

194. Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 20.

195. *Muslim Studies*, II, 263.

196. *Ibid.*, 287.

197. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 447-488.

198. *Ibid.*, 269.

199. For the full *ḥadīth*, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 126 f.

200. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 275. For further comment on the *ḥadīth*, see above p.79 f.

201. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 276, cited in Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 235.

202. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā'*, 275 f.

203. For further illustration of his attitude towards the Sufis, see *Majmu' Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Qāsim and his son Muḥammad (Riyadh, Maṭba'at al-Iftā, n.d.). His ideas are scattered throughout different volumes but are principally to be found in volume ten (see e.g. p.16 f., 28 f.) and volume eleven (see e.g. p.301).

204. H. Laoust, art. "Ibn Taimīya", *EI*².

205. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad al-Humūd, 2nd ed. (al-Aḥsā' & al-Dammām, Maktabat Ibn al-Jawzī, 1988) 21 f.

206. Koran, 4 (al-Nisā'): 171, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā*, 22.

207. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 215, 247, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *loc. cit.*

208. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā,* 31.

209. *Ibid.,* 12, 17. For discussion of the Sunnite doctrine as opposed to those of innovatory groups, see Ibn Taymiyya's books: *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā, al-'Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya* (Riyadh, Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd, 1980), *al-Fatwā al-Ḥamawiyya al-Kubrā,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥamza (Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1983), and V.E. Makari's *Ibn Taymiyya's Ethics,* 33–81.

210. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā,* 21.

211. *Ibid.*

212. *Ibid.,* 40.

213. Koran, 48 (al-Fatḥ): 29, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *loc. cit.*

214. Koran, 48 (al-Fatḥ): 18, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *loc. cit.*

215. Ibn Taymiiya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā,* 41.

216. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* 1345, cited in Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Waṣīya al-Kubrā,* 41 f.

217. Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle,* 7.

218. See *ibid.,* 6.

219. D.P. Little, "Religion under the Mamluks", 180 f.

220. Sheikh M. Safiullah, "Wahhabism: a Conceptual Relationship between Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and Taqiyy al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya", *Hamdard Islamicus,* X, no. 1, 70.

221. *Ibid.,* 71.

222. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* tr. Isma'il Faruqi (Kuwait, Intern. Islamic Fed. of Student Org., n.d.) xvi.

223. *Ibid.*

224. "The Wahhabis and Ibn Sa'ud", *Muslim World,* XXII (1932) 230.

225. *Mu'allafāt al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb,* ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Rūmī, Muḥammad Baltājī, and Sayyid Ḥijāb (Riyadh, Maṭba' Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad b. Sa'ūd, n.d.) V, 11.

226. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd,* II, 169, cited in I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 35 (with slight alteration based on comparison with the Arabic text). See also Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Mu'allafāt,* V, 234.

227. *Loc. cit.*

228. *Idem, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* xviii.

229. Koran, 51 (al-Dhāriyyāt): 56, cited in Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Mu'allafāt,* I, 7.

230. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* xix.

231. See *ibid.,* 3-24.

232. Koran, 39 (al-Zumar): 38, cited in Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* 25.

233. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

234. *Ibid.,* 26.

235. *Ibid.,* 31.

236. Koran, 7 (al-A'rāf): 138, cited in Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

237. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

238. Ḥ. Ibn Ghannām, *Tārīkh Najd,* I, 11 f.

239. *Ibid.,* 78.

240. *Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia: his People and his Land* (London, Constable, 1928) 240.

241. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* 35 f.

242. Koran, 6 (al-Anʻām): 162 f., cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* 35.

243. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

244. *Ibid.,* 60.

245. Koran, 4 (al-Nisā'): 171, cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

246. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd,* 61.

247. *Ibid.,* 68.

248. I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 334.

249. Shaikh Ḥāfiẓ Wahba, *Arabian Days* (London, A. Barker, 1964) 96.

250. *Ibid.*

251. *Ibid.,* 96 f.

252. *Ibid.,* 98.

253. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʼallafāt,* V, 40.

254. *Ibid.,* 40 f.

255. Ḥ. Ibn Ghannām, *Tārīkh Najd,* I, 49.

256. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʼallafāt,* V, 9.

257. Koran, 21 (al-Anbiyā'): 28, cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

258. Koran, 2 (al-Baqara): 255, cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʼallafāt,* V, 9 f.

259. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʼallafāt,* V, 10.

260. Koran, 74 (al-Muddaththir): 48, cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

261. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʼallafāt,* V, 113.

262. *Ibid.,* 8.

263. *Ibid.,* 10.

264. *Ibid.*

265. Koran, 59 (al-Ḥashr): 10, cited in Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *loc. cit.*

266. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʾallafāt,* V, 36.

267. Ḥ. Ibn Ghannām, *Tārīkh Najd,* I, 18 f. For further information on Wahhābī attitudes towards the Shīʻites, see ʻAbd Allāh b. ʻAbd al-Wahhāb (the *shaykh*'s son), *Fī ʻAqāʾid al-Islām min Rasāʾil al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, wa-Jawāb Ahl al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya fī Naqḍ Kalām al-Shīʻa wa-'l-Zaydiyya,* ed. Muḥammad Riḍā (Beirut, Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1981).

268. Ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, *Muʾallafāt,* V, 52.

269. *Ibid.,* 263.

270. M.S. Zaharaddin, "Wahhabism and its Influence outside Arabia", *IQ,* XXIII (1979) 148.

271. For further discussion on the rosary, see Sulaymān b. Suḥmān, *Kashf al-Shubhatayn,* ed. ʻAbd al-Sālim al-ʻAbd al-Karīm (Riyadh, Dār al-ʻĀṣima, 1987) 104–113.

272. H. Wahba, *Arabian Days,* 92.

273. I. Goldziher, *Islamic Theology,* 242.

274. See M.S. Zaharaddin, "Wahhabism and its Influence", 152; M. Khan, "A Diplomat's Report on Wahhabism", *IS,* VII (1968) 33–44.

275. M.S. Zaharaddin, "Wahhabism and its Influence" 154.

276. *Ibid.,* 152. For further information on the political conflicts between the Wahhabis and the Egyptians, see D.G. Hogarth, *Arabia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press,

1922) 99–113.

277. M. Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy*, 37.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

We commenced this project by research into the primary sources forming the material for this thesis. The sources which were ultimately included in the study are those which proved their relevance to this historical study after careful survey of the literature which discusses either in whole or in part the concept of *bidʿa*. The investigation has included a consideration of the Koran and *Sunna* as primary sources, since the Koran is for Muslims the Book of Allāh who is 'the ultimate source of authority.'[1] However, as we have seen, the Koran only suggests a lexicographical definition of *bidʿa* with merely a hint at its subsequent theological connotation. This is understandable and expected since the Koran is the Book of guidance. As A. Hasan has stated, the Koran

> calls itself 'guidance' and not a code of law. It should be noted that the Qur'ān sometimes explains itself, and as a Book of guidance (*hidāyah*) it did not leave untouched anything related to the fundamentals. As regards the actual practical shape of life to be led by a Muslim and the community as a whole, it shows and demarcates the borders of the various aspects of life. It was the task of the Prophet to present the ideal practical life in the light of those limits enunciated by the Qur'ān. The Prophet was, in fact, sent primarily to exemplify the teachings of the Qur'ān.[2]

In this respect al-Shāfi'ī said, 'Whatever the Apostle has decreed that is not based on any (textual) command from God, he has done so by God's command. So God instructed us in His saying:[3] "And verily thou wilt guide [mankind] to a straight path, the path of God..."'[4] Going further, al-Shāfi'ī sought to explain the relationship existing between the Koran and the *Sunna,* which he said could be defined in any one of three categories, *viz:* (1) where the *Sunna* is in agreement with the Koran; (2) where the *Sunna* clarifies the meaning implicit in the Koran, specifying how mankind should carry out its precepts;[5] and (3) the *Sunna* contains what the Apostle has laid down and concerning which there is no text in the Koran.[6]

Indeed, it is important to demonstrate that the concept of the *Sunna* was known to the Companions of the Prophet, and while the content was present, it was not recorded until the second century of Islam. Rahman commented that

> To the later generations the Sunna meant (as it originally did mean) the conduct of the Prophet, from whom it acquired its normativeness. But to to the extent that the tradition continued to be largely 'silent' and non-verbal, this word was applied to the actual content of the behaviour of each succeeding generation in so far as that behaviour claimed to exemplify the Prophetic pattern. It is clear that the second usage is a derivative from the former and the two are related... But the *intention* of the term Sunna was always directed towards the Apostolic model.[7]

Rahman added that by the middle of the 3rd/9th century the body of

Ḥadīth had assumed a definite form, had established almost all the details of its contents, and had obtained complete recognition of its authority.[8] The Companions of the Prophet understood the rule of the *Sunna* and the relationship of the *Sunna* with respect to the Koran, as is clear from an *athar* reported on the authority of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who is reported to have said, 'People will come to dispute with you over doubtful points in the Ḳur'ān. Answer them with the sunan, for the people of the Sunan are best able to decide about the Ḳur'ān.'[9] Therefore, we find a certain degree of insight concerning the concept of *bid'a* recorded in the *sunan* (collections of *ḥadīths*) which can be summed up in two broad aspects. Firstly, we find an insistent emphasis on the duty of Muslims to follow the *Sunna* of the Prophet which is the finest example of behaviour, and to avoid innovations in general whether they pertain to matters of belief, ritual, or custom. We find this emphasis over and over again in the *Sunna.* This is because the 'potential' innovations were increasing during the expansion of the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. Therefore, we find the Companions of the Prophet warning against innovations both in their words and in their conduct. The authority of the Companions in this respect cannot be easily gainsaid as they were present during the revelation of the Koran and lived in close intimacy with the Prophet. Secondly, we find that the *Sunna* of the Prophet and the Companions' traditions contain only slight notice of the actual content of *bida'*, whether they are linked with prayer such as supplication innovations, delaying of prayer and the telling of pious tales after the dawn (*fajr*) and afternoon (*'aṣr*) prayers, or are credal innovations such as those

embraced by the Khārijites and the Qadarites.

It is not surprising to find that the *Sunna* does not spell out the detailed contents of *bidʿa,* because this is the duty of the faithful in all subsequent ages. So, while the *Sunna* provides greater insight concerning the concept of *bidʿa* than does the Koran, the detailed contents are still left for scholars to work out in specific instances. The scholars have in their hands the necessary sources enabling them to work out whether or not specific acts or beliefs of individuals are to be deemed innovations or not. Overall, the Koran is the primary source and, 'while *Sunnah* undoubtedly constitutes also an independent source, it is closely linked with and is secondary to the Qur'ān.'[10] However, there are other sources of Islamic law, the most important of which, coming close after the Koran and the *Sunna* in authority, are *ijmāʿ* (consensus) and *qiyās* (analogy). The difference between the Koran and the *Sunna* on the one hand and *ijmāʿ* and *qiyās* on the other is that the authority of the Koran and the *Sunna*

> is unchanged in all times and circumstances. *Qiyās* and *ijmāʿ* are, in fact, instruments or agencies for legislation on new problems for whose solution a direct guidance from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* is not available. It is, therefore, obvious that *qiyās* and *ijmāʿ* are considered to be an authoritative source of law being subservient to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah.*'[11]

Our examination has therefore revealed a distinction between the lexicographical and the theological senses of the term *bidʿa.* In the

the subject. In general, however, credal innovation was regarded as the most serious innovation, posing a major threat to Sunnite doctrine. This can be supported by two facts. Firstly, al-Baghdādī in his book *al-Firaq* explained that some groups of innovators do not belong to the community of Islam. Other groups of innovators, according to al-Baghdādī, had the right to be counted among the Muslim community in some legal aspects such as attending congregational prayers, but he denied them the legal right to marry among Sunnites, apparently to prevent the further spread in the community of their innovations. Secondly, al-Shāṭibī divided *bida'* into essential *bida'* and relative *bida'*. Essential *bida'*, according to al-Shāṭibī, are more serious than relative *bida'*, so if anyone examined the definition of essential *bida'* with its examples provided by al-Shāṭibī he would come to realize that credal innovation is an essential *bid'a*. Furthermore, ritual innovation is less dangerous than credal innovation, but ritual innovation in general is more serious than custom innovation since the *'ibādāt* are more important than people's daily habits.

An important conclusion of our discussion of the subject of *bid'a* is that certain innovations, whether credal, ritual, or custom, occupied discussion in all three periods while some innovations only occupied the first and the second periods. Also in the second and in the third periods some previously unmentioned innovations emerged whether belonging to credal, ritual, or custom innovations. In this respect, it might be instructive to highlight this issue by some representative examples. Concerning the issue of credal innovations, we can see a

confusion arising from the division of *bida'* into good and bad may have strengthened the position of those who stood against any such division.

As has been noted earlier, the discussion of ritual and custom innovation in early Islam was limited. However, at that time and also later, Muslims were occupied with establishing Sunnite belief on the one hand and, on the other, they were kept busy refuting beliefs of innovative groups within the *umma* such as the Khārijites, Shī'ites, Murji'ites, and Qadarites. This attention was clearly more important than innovations which may have been perceived as being introduced from either Christian or Jewish provenance. So during the first of our time periods examined here, the emphasis of scholars was fosused on credal innovations among all four of the major schools of jurisprudence. Even so, one Mālikite scholar (Ibn Waḍḍāḥ) and one Ḥanbalite scholar (al-'Ukbarī) did discuss both credal and ritual innovations. So the developing process of discussion of the concept of *bid'a* was already under way during this early period. This is illustrated in al-Shāfi'ī's formulation of the idea of dividing *bida'* into good and bad in which he made the first coherent effort to derive such a division from the Prophetic and Companions' traditions. Mālik was also likely aware of the possibility of the division of *bida'* into good and bad although he did not develop explicitly the idea of the division of *bida'* into good and bad; however, according to his follower Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, Mālik disliked any kind of *bid'a* even if it were good. The twofold division of *bida'* into good and bad may be accounted a starting point in the developing discussion of the theory of *bid'a*. This distinction

between good and bad *bida'* was popularized mainly by Shāfi'ite scholars during the middle period of our discussion and we have seen that their ideas influenced some among the Mālikite scholars. As Goldziher has commented, the distinction between good and bad *bida'* 'soon became the common property of the Muslim world, familiar to the most commonplace people.'[15]

The middle period witnessed the development of the division of *bida'* into good and bad by the Shāfi'ite scholar Abū Shāma. Indeed, the theoreical division of the categories of *bida'* became five in number by analogy with the five categories of legal valuation. This fivefold division was initiated by al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām (577-660/1181-1262), followed by his pupil, the Mālikite scholar al-Qarāfī (d. 1285), and picked up again by other sholars such as al-Turkumānī. The most plausible explanation for Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's fivefold division of *bida'* is that, being a Shafī'ite, he was not averse to the concept of dividing *bida'* into different categories and further, being an expert in the theoretical science of jurisprudence (*'ilm uṣūl al-fiqh*), he saw that the most appropriate division of *bida'* was into the five classes according to the five categories of legal valuation. However, this fivefold division seems far-removed from any realistic view of *bid'a* established according to the *Sharī'a,* so that Ibn 'Abd al-Salām and his student al-Qarāfī failed to present any evidence from the *Sharī'a* in support of their idea. This is because *bida'* cannot be either obligatory or recommended for 'what belong to these two categories are not innovations, since the characteristic of innovation is to exceed what the Lawgiver (*al-Shāri'*)

[i.e. God] ordains."[16]

During the middle period also, the volume of discussion devoted to ritual and custom innovations appears to have increased over the preceding period, which may have been due to two possible causes. The first is the continued expansion of the Muslim community, while the second is the shift in scholars' attention from credal innovations, which had thoroughly engaged the attention of their predecessors in the early period, to the problem of ritual and custom innovations. The discussion of ritual innovations was principally pursued by the Mālikite scholar al-Ṭurṭūshī (451-520/1059-1126) and the Shāfi'ite scholar Abū Shāma (599-665/1202-1266). The discussion of custom innovations was pursued by the Ḥanbalite scholars Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) and al-Maqdisī (d. 643/1245).

The third period marks a continuation of both the first and the middle periods in terms of the discussion of credal and ritual and custom innovations. The period also witnessed a major development in the discussion of theoretical aspects of *bid'a,* first in the writing of al-Shāṭibī, who contributed to the subject more than any other scholar, and then by Ibn Taymiyya. Al-Shāṭibī took great pains to discuss *bid'a* 'and the problem of its legitimacy."[17] Both Ibn Taymiyya and al-Shāṭibī denounced the division of *bida'* into good and bad and produced weighty refutations against the attempt to do so. Furthermore, al-Shāṭibī rejected the method of dividing *bida'* into five types corresponding to the five categories

of legal valuation. He also asserted that the very concept of making this fivefold division was itself an innovation since it had no support or evidence in the *Sharī'a*.[18] After al-Shāṭibī refuted the division of *bida'* either into good and bad or into the five categories, he divided *bida'* (regarded as evil in terms of the legal understanding) into two categories: essential *bida'* (*bida' ḥaqīqiyya*) and relative *bida'* (*bida' iḍāfiyya*). He also incorporated in his theoretical discussion a consideration of the difference between both types of innovation and matters of human welfare (*maṣāliḥ mursala*) which 'illustrate the type of new things where the intention and the act both conform to the purpose of *Sharī'a*,'[19] a point which contrasts with *bida'*. Al-Shāṭibī was very careful to spell out the difference between *bida'* and actions for the sake of human welfare (*maṣāliḥ mursala*), since a failure to understand this distinction correctly had, he felt, confused the Shāfi'ite scholar al-'Izz b 'Abd al-Salām and his pupil al-Qarāfī and had induced them to divide *bida'* into five categories. The most notable example of an action for the sake of human welfare, al-Shāṭibī observed, was the collection of the Koran after the death of the Prophet. Al-Shāṭibī recognized the collection of the Koran as 'a new thing' but the intention and the act both conformed to the purpose of the *Sharī'a* and therefore the action was regarded as being for the sake of human welfare. On the other hand, the modern Jordanian scholar al-Hilālī suggests that in any case the collection of the Koran was the fulfilment of a promise made by God in the Koran itself:[20] 'It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it.'[21] Thus, al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām and al-Qarāfi had, apparently needlessly, considered this as an example of an obligatory innovation.

The third period also witnessed the development of the discussion of *bid'a,* in the sense of credal and ritual and custom innovations, on a far larger scale. In actual fact, all credal, ritual, and custom innovations had spread among the Islamic community reflecting penetration from other religious communities, in particular with Christians and Jews, so that during this period Muslims became influenced by certain of their ritual festivals.

To sum up the third period, it is first of all evident that the contribution of all scholars was very great, covering the development of the theoretical aspect of *bid'a,* as in the case of al-Shāṭibī and Ibn Taymiyya, the development in the discussion of both ritual and custom innovations as in the case of Ibn al-Ḥājj, al-Turkumānī, and Usuman dan Fodio, vigorous attacks made against *bida'* practised by people like the Sufis who venerated saints as in the case of Ibn Taymiyya and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and overall a deep concern for personal and public behaviour and good conduct according to the *Sharī'a* as in the case of Ibn al-Ḥājj.

After this brief review of the three periods, we may conclude our discussion by indicating one important result of our examination of *bid'a* which stems from the threefold category that we have established, i.e. credal, ritual, and custom innovation. One important fact to be mentioned here is that since innovations kept emerging throughout the ages, scholars continued to write about

the subject. In general, however, credal innovation was regarded as the most serious innovation, posing a major threat to Sunnite doctrine. This can be supported by two facts. Firstly, al-Baghdādī in his book *al-Firaq* explained that some groups of innovators do not belong to the community of Islam. Other groups of innovators, according to al-Baghdādī, had the right to be counted among the Muslim community in some legal aspects such as attending congregational prayers, but he denied them the legal right to marry among Sunnites, apparently to prevent the further spread in the community of their innovations. Secondly, al-Shāṭibī divided *bidaʿ* into essential *bidaʿ* and relative *bidaʿ*. Essential *bidaʿ*, according to al-Shāṭibī, are more serious than relative *bidaʿ*, so if anyone examined the definition of essential *bidaʿ* with its examples provided by al-Shāṭibī he would come to realize that credal innovation is an essential *bidʿa*. Furthermore, ritual innovation is less dangerous than credal innovation, but ritual innovation in general is more serious than custom innovation since the *ʿibādāt* are more important than people's daily habits.

An important conclusion of our discussion of the subject of *bidʿa* is that certain innovations, whether credal, ritual, or custom, occupied discussion in all three periods while some innovations only occupied the first and the second periods. Also in the second and in the third periods some previously unmentioned innovations emerged whether belonging to credal, ritual, or custom innovations. In this respect, it might be instructive to highlight this issue by some representative examples. Concerning the issue of credal innovations, we can see a

clearly continuous concern about the Shī'ite group and their innovations from scholars in all three periods. This is due to the survival of some Shī'ite groups who developed their own institutions and established their own political power. Discussion of the Qadarites, Murji'ites, and Jahmites, by contrast, is not emphasized in the third period. This is due to the fact that they no longer posed any threat to the doctrines of the Sunnites. Other groups, like the Khārijites, are mentioned in the third period but without emphasis since the more extreme groups of Khārijites had not survived, although some of the less extreme Khārijites still existed, such as the 'Ibāḍites. Moreover, in the second and in the third periods we can see new credal innovations emerging, like the innovation of monism (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and using the saints' graves for intercession. The latter example can also be accounted as a ritual innovation since it has a link with prayer.

The same pattern also applies to ritual innovations where we see their discussion repeated over and over, like the prayer at the middle of the month of Sha'bān, gathering of people on the night of 'Arafa, and the innovations relating to the mosque such as its decoration. In the second and third periods, the discussion of many new innovations appeared, such as the 'prayer of wish' (*ṣalāt al-raghā'ib*) in congregation, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, the imitation of Christians in their celebration of the birthday of Jesus during the winter, and the celebration of the new year. Contrary to this, the discussion of a few ritual innovations ceased during the third period, such as the muezzin's

waving a garment when calling the faithful to prayer. The absence of the discussion of ritual innovations does not suggest that such *bida'* disappeared altogether; only a thorough examination of the historical and other sources would yield material on this point, which task lies beyond the scope of the present study.

Concerning custom innovation, we can see that some discussion went on during all of the three periods, such as comment on listening to music and looking at beardless youths. However, in the third period, discussion of many custom innovations occurred, such as consideration of the decorations of brides by men and allowing everyone to see them, keeping mixed company, dancing together in festivals, and the public display of unveiled faces of women in Mecca durring the *ḥajj* or *'umra.* It is noteworthy that some scholars regarded the above examples of custom innovation simply as *ma'ṣīya* (disobedience) to God rather than as innovations as such. The reason why the scholars did not regard the above examples as custom innovations is that there are many warnings from the Prophet concerning these activities.

Another important feature of the writings of all scholars who considered principally ritual innovations is that they did not rank innovations according to which were more or less dangerous. Also the same pattern applies to the custom innovations. However, the degree of their concern is evident in the volume of discussion generated over a particular issue. The most probable reason for their not ranking *bida'* according to the seriousness of the threat that they posed to

Sunnite Islam was that they were anxious to banish innovations altogether, without engaging in the invidious and unnecessary business of pronouncing on which were the more dangerous.

Overall, the four major schools of jurisprudence shared a common concern over the problem of *bidʿa* and participated in the discussion by expressing their different opinions. The differences of scholars among these schools were understandable in that they each had before them the most important sources of authority, i.e. the Koran and the *Sunna,* but each had a different personality and point of view with regard to this and other topics. However, in terms of the contribution that each of them made to the development of the discussion of *bidʿa,* there was unevenness in the extent of their engagement with the problem. Thus, the Mālikite school of jurisprudence seems to have contributed more than the others to the discussion. This can be clearly seen in al-Shāṭibī's treatise which may indeed by accounted an encyclopedia in the discussion of *bidʿa.* In addition to this, the Mālikite scholars such as al-Ṭurṭūshī, Ibn al-Ḥājj, and Usuman dan Fodio paid attention to the various innovations, but concentrated most on ritual innovations. The Mālikites also achieved the distinction of producing the earliest writers on *bidʿa* and one of them whose work is the earliest extant treatise (i.e. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ), became a foundation source for many writers on the subject.

Another characteristic of the Mālikites was that the majority of them were opposed to the division of *bidʿa* as apparently had been their eponymous founder Imām Mālik. However, a few of the Mālikites, like al-Qarāfī and Usuman dan

Fodio, were influenced by the Shāfi'ite scholars in their attempt to divide *bida'* into different categories.

The second most notable contributors to the development of the discussion of *bid'a* were Shāfi'ite scholars who developed and popularized the division of *bida'* into good and bad. Indeed, as we have seen, one Shāfi'ite scholar - al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām - went further and initiated a division of *bida'* into five categories corresponding to the five categories of legal valuation. It is also noteworthy that whereas Shāfi'ite scholars during the first period were concerned with credal innovations, during the second period they were concerned with both credal and ritual innovations. In the third period, the Shāfi'ite scholars were only concerned with ritual and custom innovations.

The third school of jurisprudence in terms of the volume of their writing on the subject of *bid'a* was that of the Ḥanbalites. Indeed, as we have seen, while during the first period the Ḥanbalite scholar al-'Ukbarī was concerned about credal, ritual, and custom innovations, during the second period attention was focused by Ibn al-Jawzī on the source of innovation in the devices of Satan. Similarly, al-Maqdisī was concerned about the behaviour of people and custom innovations. The Ḥanbalite scholars in the third period can be characterized by the vigorous attack that they made against *bid'a*. As I. Goldziher observed, the 'zeal of the Hanbalites had no use for toleration of innovations. They saw it as their vocation to be the heralds of the *sunna* against all dogmatic, ritual, or social

bid'a."[22] The protagonists in this concerted attack against *bid'a* were Ibn Taymiyya and his successor Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Ibn Taymiyya also spelt out in detail the dangers attaching to any imitation of other religions' festivals, particularly those of the Christians and Jews.

The last school of jurisprudence in terms of the volume of their contribution to the discussion of *bid'a* was that of the Ḥanafites who contributed far less than the others. It is unfortunate that we do not have any Ḥanafite writer on the subject of *bid'a* in the first and middle periods. However, the Ḥanafites did produce one great writer in the third period, namely al-Turkumānī, who was principally concerned with ritual and custom innovations. The contribution of this great writer was very significant because his book contains a valuable discussion of various subjects such as the *futūwa* associations, the habits and customs of the Turks who converted to Islam but retained their pre-Islamic customs, the celebration of other religions' festivals, and *bida'* relating to women's practices.

The present research will hopefully point forward to the possibility of further research into the works on *bid'a,* especially since some of the works referred to in this study warrant a much fuller, specialized examination and commentary. The present writer would suggest in particular that the writings of Ibn al-Ḥājj, al-Shāṭibī, al-Turkumānī, al-Ṭurṭūshī, and Abū Shāma would all prove rewarding to further examination.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. A. Hasan, *Early Islamic Jurisprudence,* 33.

2. *Ibid.,* 45.

3. Al-Shāfi'ī, *Islamic Jurisprudence,* 118 f.

4. Koran, 42 (al-Shūrā): 52 f.

5. Al-Shāfi'ī, *Islamic Jurisprudence,* 120.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam,* 2nd ed. (Chicago, Chicago University press, 1979) 54 f.

8. *Ibid.,* 63.

9. Al-Dārīmī, *Sunan al-Dārimī, muqaddima, bāb* 16, cited in A.J. Wensinck, art. "Sunna", *SEI.*

10. A. Hasan, *Early Islamic Jurisprudence,* 42.

11. *Ibid.*

12. See above p.81-83

13. See above p.76.

14. I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* II, 37.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Al-Makkī, *Tahdhīb al-Furūq,* IV, 221.

17. Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 300.

18. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām,* I, 191 f.

19. Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt,* II, 11 f., cited in Mas'ud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy,* 301.

20. S. al-Hilālī, *al-Bidʿa,* 37.

21. Koran, 75 (al-Qiyāma): 17.

22. I. Goldziher, *Islamic Theology,* 240.

Appendix

Authors and their works on *bid'a*: First period (1)

Author	death date	School of jurisprudence	Geographical location	Type of innovation	Others
Abū Ḥanīfa	150/767	Ḥanafī	Iraq	Credal innovation	
al-Ṭaḥāwī	731-792	Ḥanafī	Iraq	credal innovation	
Mālik	179/795	Mālikī	Medina	both credal and ritual innovation	
Ibn Waḍḍāh	280/901	Mālikī	al-Andalus	both credal and ritual but with more emphasis on ritual	
al-Shāfi'i	204/820	Shāfi'ī	Medina,Egypt and Iraq	credal innovation	theoretical basis for the division of *bid'a* into good and bad.
al-Ash'arī	324/875	Shāfi'ī	Iraq	credal innovation	
al-Malatī	377/978	Shāfi'ī	'Asqalan	credal innovation	
al-Baghdādī	329/1037	Shāfi'ī	Iraq and Nishapur	credal innovation	
al-Bayhaqī	458/1066	Shāfi'ī	Nishapur	credal innovation	
Ibn Ḥanbal	241/885	Ḥanbalī	Iraq	credal innovation	
al-'Ukbarī	387/997	Ḥanbalī	Iraq	credal, ritual and custom	

(1) This table and the following tables are a short summary of the discussion o
bid'a in the three periods. Geographical location means
here the places where the authors spent most of their lives.

Authors and their works on *bid'a*: Middle period.

Author	Death date	school of jurisprudence	Geographical location	Type of innovation	Others
al-Ṭurṭūshī	520/1126	Mālikī	al-Andalus, Iraq and Syria	mainly ritual	
al-Qarāfī	684-1285	Mālikī	Egypt		the division, theoretical and practical of *bid'a* into five categories.
al-Makkī	(n.d)	Mālikī			rectification of al-Qarafi's division of *bid'a* into five categories.
al-Shahrastāni	548/1153	Shāfi'ī	Shahrastan and Baghdad	credal innovation	
Ibn 'Abd al-Salām	660/1262	Shāfi'ī	Damascus and Egypt		five-fold division of *bid'a.*
Abū Shāma	665/1266	Shāfi'ī	Egypt	mainly ritual	
Ibn al-Jawzī	597/1200	Ḥanbalī	Iraq	credal,ritual and custom	
al-Maqdisī	643/1245	Ḥanbalī	Damascus	ritual and custom	

Authors and their works on *bid'a*: Third period.

Author	Death date	School of jurisprudence	Geographical location	Type of innovation	others
al-Turkumānī	14th century	Ḥanafī	Mecca, Syria and Egypt	mainly ritual and custom	
Ibn al-Ḥājj	737/1336	Mālikī	Egypt	mainly ritual	
al-Shāṭibi	790/1388	Mālikī	al-Andalus		the theoritical discussion of *bid'a* and the refutation of its divisions
al-Wansharisī	914/1508	Mālikī	Morrocco		legal opinions on ritual,creed and custom
Usman Dan Fodio	1233/1817	Mālikī	Nigeria	mainly ritual	
al-Suyūṭī	911/1505	Shāfi'ī	Egypt	ritual and custom	
Ibn Taymiyya	728/1327	Ḥanbalī	Damascus	mainly credal and ritual	theoretical discussion of *bid'a*.
Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb	1206/1792	Ḥanbali	Najd	mainly credal and ritual	

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